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President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 11 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council

Mr. Gopinathan (India): I would like to convey my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador John Negroponte, Permanent Representative of the United States and President of the Security Council, for his presentation to the General Assembly of the report of the Council for the period from 1 August 2002 to 31 July 2003.

Before proceeding further, I wish to convey a sense of our disappointment over the discontinuance of the practice, of convening an open meeting of the Security Council to consider its draft report to the General Assembly. As many of us will recall, the practice was instituted last year, at the initiative of Singapore, who is unfortunately no longer on the Council, with the intention of improving the quality and consideration of the report within the Council before its presentation to the General Assembly. We would like to voice our apprehension that this worthy practice, launched last year, might end up as an isolated attempt. In our view, this would be a disservice to the general membership, which stood to profit immensely from the views of members of the Council on how they themselves perceived and evaluated the work of the Council during the period under review. We would not like to infer that the discontinuation of this useful practice represents any weakening of the Council's collective resolve to continue with a sprit of reform and greater transparency in the working of the Security Council.

We agree with the conclusion contained in the report that the last 12 months have represented a steady increase in the workload of the Security Council. Admittedly, the Council has had to confront some of the most difficult issues during this period.

It would be remiss on our part not to reiterate our deep regret over the inability of the Council to reach satisfactory agreement on the issue of war and peace in Iraq in the first quarter of this year. We can only attribute the inability of the Council to arrive at a collective and unified decision on the major issues placed before it to the lack of balanced representation in its current composition.

The Prime Minister of India did touch upon this imbalance when he stated in his address to the current session of the Assembly on September 25, "For the Security Council to represent genuine multilateralism in its decisions and actions, its membership must reflect current world realities" (*A/58/PV.11, p. 14*). Within the United Nations, there is ample recognition of the need for the Organization and its architecture, in the maintenance of international peace and security, to adapt to the needs and realities of the times. The Secretary-General himself underscored this point when he said that to regain the confidence of States, and of world opinion, the Security Council must become "more broadly representative of the international community as a whole as well as the geo-political realities of today" (*A/58/PV.7, p. 3*).

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The Council's preoccupation with Iraq did not, despite the best intentions of its members, afford it sufficient time for a more serious examination of other major issues on its agenda relating to the Middle East, Africa and Afghanistan. In the area of counter-terrorism, while every effort has been made by the Council to maintain the momentum achieved, mechanisms are yet to be put in place that would hold countries accountable for their genuine commitment to and actions in the fight against terrorism originating in territories under their control. The Council needs to move from the inexhaustible stage of helping to establish legal and financial frameworks to a more serious examination of the actual contributions — or lack thereof — by Member States to counter-terrorism efforts. Only by doing so would it have come to grips with the real issues at hand.

The non-permanent members of Security Council have taken upon themselves the responsibility, based on their long-term interests, to pursue the agenda of greater transparency and reform in the working of the Security Council. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case. In the period under review, new and ingenious methods appear to have been invented, designed to confuse and often exclude the general membership from specific projects being pursued in the Security Council.

We would like to comment, by way of illustration, on a few instances in the functioning of the Security Council that may be perceived as attempts to obfuscate or limit access to it by the general membership.

Delayed decision-making on the format of discussions to be followed is a case in point. In at least one instance, the President of the Council delayed a decision on the format of discussions to be followed on an important but controversial thematic topic until a very late stage, at which point the subject was declared open to the participation of the general membership. We are not in a position to fathom the reasons behind such actions. We can only hope that they were not intended to deny time for adequate preparations by delegations seeking to intervene on the given subject.

Mr. Fadaifard (Islamic Republic of Iran), Vice-President, took the Chair.

A second case in point is the Council's experimentation with different modes of participation under rule 37 of its provisional rules of procedure. The decision by the Council presidency to restrict participation in an open debate on an issue of import to a late stage and to only one or two candidates per region could, by its very selectivity, have resulted in acts of omission or exclusion. Moreover, as is well known, some regional groups, such as the Asian Group, do not have the mandate to discuss and decide on issues other than elections. Such factors could well have added to the impracticability and undemocratic nature of the decision taken.

A third case in point is discrimination between members and non-members of the Council on time limits for statements. In a recent incident the President of the Council declared a time limit for statements during an open debate on a subject of considerable importance. However, while members of the Council were allowed to give full reign to their views without observing any time limit, the general membership was subjected to the strictest implementation of a restrictive time limit. That incident was considered serious enough to produce considerable adverse reaction at meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Arab Group.

The discriminatory treatment between members and non-members of the Council tends to be pronounced during the so-called ministerial-level meetings of the Council, which now are held increasingly in two segments, one for the members and the other for the less privileged. In that context, we would also like to state that expecting non-members to be content with reading parts of their statements and circulating a longer text is unrealistic as long as the provisional verbatim records reflect only what is actually spoken in the formal meetings of the Council.

A fourth case in point is the surprise scheduling of open debates with selective notification. In a recent instance, an open debate of the Council was scheduled in response to a serious incident which occurred over a weekend. Some non-members of the Council did learn of the meeting and were able to make statements under rule 37. Others were fortunate if they happened to learn of the event from television broadcasts. The issue here continues to remain one of selectivity and arbitrariness.

I must hasten to point out that the issues referred to are not being raised with the intention of castigating those involved, but with the desire to bring to the attention of the larger membership of the General Assembly and the select membership of the Security Council the areas where greater transparency, predictability and some even-handedness would be

welcome, and could add to the Council's effectiveness. In our view, if the Council followed some rules-of-thumb in its practices, it would go a long way in assuring the general membership of the Council's sincerity in attempting to take into account the membership's concerns during Council deliberations. We shall attempt to list a few suggestions in that regard.

Unless an item is introduced in reaction to major events of the day, all open debates involving the participation of the general membership of the Organization must be announced at the beginning of the month, when the programme of work is presented and adopted. Surprise scheduling should be avoided wherever possible and, if absolutely unavoidable, measures to inform all members concerned through the mail or by facsimile, electronic mail or telephone communication to the relevant missions would be desirable.

All non-members of the Council wishing to participate under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure should be allowed the time they require to convey their views. If that is not possible due to the exigencies of the situation — and we believe this should be truly exceptional — a standard pre-announced time limit should be imposed upon all, members and non-members alike, without any discrimination.

The increasing resort to new and fanciful thematic issues as the crowning glory of non-permanent member presidencies should be rationalized and restricted, in order to better utilize the time available for the consideration of pressing current issues relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The idea of wrap-up sessions, presumably conceived to allow for stock-taking at the end of a month's work, should not be utilized to promote controversial issues that selectively advance the national agendas of members concerned.

Briefings by Council presidencies to non-members of the Council tend to be arbitrary and ad hoc in their scheduling. Some presidencies tend to attach due importance to that process, while others have been indifferent to this requirement. It has been observed that, in several instances, despite the scheduling of briefings to the general membership, such briefings either do not take place at all or are carried out in a perfunctory manner. In fact, briefings to the media are far more comprehensive and regular than those to non-members. Briefings by Council presidencies need to be regular, thorough and qualitative if the Council is to fulfil its commitment to ensuring adequate transparency in its functioning among Member States of the Organization.

In conclusion, we express the hope that the existing and aspiring non-permanent members of the Council will take up with renewed vigour the process of improving the accountability and working methods of the Security Council in a manner that would bring it into a more harmonious functional relationship with the larger membership of the United Nations.

Mr. Thamrin (Indonesia): It is a pleasure for my delegation to welcome the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/58/2), covering the period 1 August 2002 to 31 July 2003. I would like to express our appreciation to the President of the Council, Ambassador Negroponte, for his clear and capable introduction of the report. As usual, the report provides a quick overview of the Council in the last year in its area of responsibility, which is the maintenance of international peace and security. As we all know, the Council's report for the past year was very helpful in that respect. This is always a good opportunity for Member States to take a look at the work of the Council in the course of the previous year, and one that we always look forward to. We thank the members of the Council for the report.

Before I go any further, I would also like to welcome, on behalf of my delegation, the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. This is a very important issue to my delegation and to other Member States of the United Nations, and we always welcome this annual opportunity to contribute to it.

The report of the Security Council before us is a very important document. It faithfully details the work of the Council within the period under consideration. Unfortunately, it remains little more than a blow-by-blow account, one that could easily have been prepared by individual Permanent Missions to the United Nations or obtained from the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. It contains previously publicized documents, but little analysis or explanation of the Council's actions and decisions, though many delegations have requested this in the past. Moreover, the report shows very little evidence of its purpose as an important accounting to the Assembly. What makes the report even more difficult to understand is that it is still being

sent late to Member States every year. There is therefore a clear contradiction between its contents and the amount of time needed to process it. Unless there is significant analytical input, it is difficult to see why a report with a cut-off date of July cannot reach Member States within the following month.

In that connection, it is curious to consider, for instance, that despite all of the events that took place in connection with Iraq during the period under review, the report devotes just over two pages to the subject, without a word beyond what was already known to Member States. For an institution concerned with the maintenance of peace and security, the annual report contains almost no mention of the hostilities. Indeed, the report refers only to the President of the Council being informed of "the commencement of military action" (*A/58/2, p. 7*) and meeting "the period of conflict in Iraq" (*ibid.*).

There should be no mistake about this: when the Council reports to the Assembly it is not a matter of a concession by one body of the United Nations to another, but the fulfilment of a Charter obligation. This obligation should be wholly and consistently fulfilled, in the interest of the peoples of the United Nations, by both the Secretariat and the Security Council. Our request is for a document that is useful to the wider membership of our Organization because it is timely, informative and analytical.

Despite the foregoing, we are pleased that the Council was able to accomplish so much with its increased workload during the period covered. We note the progress in its work in such areas as African conflicts, the Middle East and counter-terrorism. Particular mention must be made of the Council's focus on the situation in Africa, where there has been renewed instability in some countries, notably Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. The Council demonstrated laudable commitment when it sent two missions to different locations on the continent at the same time.

Similarly, the work of the Council in connection with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially the implementation of the Quartet road map, deserves commendation. Indonesia has always supported the road map and has urged its faithful implementation. In our statements to the Council, we have also taken the view that the Council should maintain a proactive stance. It is to be hoped that, despite recent setbacks in that process, the Council will find ways of encouraging the parties, thereby steering the process carefully and with determination towards the stated objectives.

My delegation is gratified at the progress that continues to be made in some of these conflict situations, and the intervention that is therefore possible, not only in averting humanitarian crises, but also in promoting peace and democracy.

Before concluding my comments on the report, I would like to note that, while the Council tried to encourage greater transparency in recent years by organizing monthly wrap-up sessions that were open to Member States, that pattern has not been followed during the past year. In our view, what is needed are more — not fewer — such occasions; they are important contributions that can be duly reported in the Council's annual reports to the General Assembly.

It remains a matter of great concern to my delegation that no substantial progress has been made on the issue of Security Council reform nearly 10 years after the Open-ended Working Group was established. The events of the early part of this year underscore what we have continued to stress — comprehensive reform of the Council is long overdue, if the decisions of that body are to continue to enjoy the support of the larger membership of this Organization.

There can be no doubt that a transparent, democratic and representative Security Council, whose membership and practices reflect the world of the twenty-first century — not of the first half of the twentieth century — is the only structure capable of achieving this goal. We should not place this overriding objective after national or narrower interests.

Mr. Kirn (Slovenia): In my statement I will refer to both agenda items — one on the report of the Security Council and the other on Security Council reform, thus joining those who believe that the joint debates serve well both the substance of the issues and the efficient use of time.

At the outset, let me thank the Security Council and the Secretariat for the comprehensive report on the work of the Council during the past year, and in particular Ambassador Negroponte of the United States, the current President of the Council, for introducing the Council report. We welcome the continuation of the structure and approach of the report introduced last year, once again making the report concise, easier to read and analytical.

During the past year, the Council, and consequently the Organization, has been tested severely. The unity of purpose and action of the Council has been and continues to be called into question. I am, of course, referring to the Iraqi crisis. As the Secretary-General notes in his report on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the climate of cooperation and consensus was seriously eroded by the war against Iraq. We call once again on the members of the Council to strive for solutions for Iraq that will command wide international and Iraqi support and will improve security in the country, speed up the process of Iraqi democratization and institution-building and foster a climate of social and economic well-being for the Iraqi people.

This and other crises of today's world demonstrate, in our opinion, increasing global interdependence in the sphere of security, whereby the Council holds primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We believe these crises also serve as a stark reminder of the urgent need to adapt the Security Council's permanent and non-permanent composition, as well as its working methods, including the right of veto, to cope efficiently with the geopolitical realities of today's world. I shall address the issue of Security Council reform in the latter part of my statement.

On a more positive side, we commend the continuous trend towards greater transparency in the Council's work. Still, we should aim for greater transparency in the future work of the Council. The increasing practice of holding open Council meetings contributes significantly to that end, as it provides opportunities for the general membership to participate in the Council's work. We especially welcome the growing use of Council field missions, such as those that have been conducted over the past year in Central Africa and West Africa, as well as the meetings held by the Council with troop-contributing countries.

Furthermore, we commend the Council meetings held on the topical issues of our times. Slovenia has been a longstanding proponent of the Council's addressing the protection of civilians affected by armed conflicts and the prevention of conflicts. Recognizing the importance of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations, we are particularly pleased with the Council's ongoing attention to women and peace and security. The same goes for the issue of children and armed conflict. During the last open debate on this issue, Slovenia was among those that welcomed the innovative, yet, in our view, necessary practice, of listing those entities still recruit children into their armed forces.

I wish to take this opportunity particularly to welcome the recent open debate of the Council on the subject of justice and the rule of law and the role of the United Nations. Conflict-management and post-conflict resolution cannot be successfully dealt with without addressing the rule of law from its various points of view, among others, by including this essential component more often in peacekeeping operations.

Both the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia are cases in point on the importance of justice in bringing about the difficult process of national reconciliation. We believe that it is the role of the Council, and indeed, in its own interest, to uphold the integrity of the Statute of the International Criminal Court in the area of preventing and settling disputes.

We welcome the Council's attention given to Africa, particularly during recent months. The French-led European mission in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo set a very positive example of how the prompt successful cooperation of regional partners in crisis management is indeed feasible. The recent signing of the Memorandum of the European Union-United Nations Joint Declaration on Crisis Management is an important step in the right direction, one that Slovenia also welcomes in its capacity as a European Union acceding State. It should also serve in exploring more ambitiously the issue of strengthened cooperation of the United Nations, notably the Security Council, with existing regional organizations.

Let me now touch upon the question of the reform of the Security Council. Without jeopardizing our intent, we could re-read our statements of last year, and express our thoughts of last year to the effect that the Security Council is simply not reflecting the reality of today's world, and that we should therefore not be surprised when problems of authority, legitimacy and effectiveness of the Council are raised. But again, that would not sufficient to meet our needs today, not because last year's assessments would no longer be accurate, but because the urgency of reform and the momentum for change are much greater.

Over the past year, the entire Organization — primarily, of course, the Security Council — has encountered serious challenges. As the Secretary-

General, Kofi Annan, said in his address before the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session:

> "... we must not shy away from questions about the adequacy and effectiveness of the rules and instruments at our disposal.
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> "Among those instruments, none is more important than the Security Council itself" (*A/58/PV.7, p. 3*).

The Security Council is too important to be left on the margin of our discussions and eventually of our decisions related to United Nations reform. Security Council reform should be a part of United Nations reform.

The Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform has been a useful forum that has produced a number of good ideas still relevant to today's purpose. Yet we must face the fact that its work is at an impasse. We cannot afford another 10 years of fruitless debates. We need a more ambitious framework based on a common perception of the need for change. Such a debate must start immediately if we wish to take advantage of the current momentum and if we want to strengthen the Organization. We encourage the President to stimulate such a debate.

While supporting the Secretary-General's intention to establish a high-level panel of eminent personalities, we trust that our search for Council reform solutions will be seen as a part of the same process and therefore as complementary to the work of such a high-level panel.

In conclusion, I want to point out once again that the momentum for change is there, and we need to seize it unambiguously. As the Secretary-General said, this momentum may be no less decisive than that in 1945 itself, when the United Nations was founded. At this point in time, all of us may not yet share a concept of the end results of Council reform, but we share a perception of the urgent need for a changed Security Council that is more representative, more legitimate, more transparent and more efficient.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): I should like to express Austria's gratitude to Ambassador John Negroponte, current President of the Security Council, for his concise presentation of the report of the Council (A/58/2). At the same time, my delegation commends the Secretariat for its excellent work in compiling that invaluable reference and source of information. The presentation of the report is a welcome continuation of the Security Council's dialogue with the General Assembly in discharge of its duties pursuant to Article 24 of the Charter. That dialogue will enhance the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council in promoting the purposes and principles of the Charter.

An adequate flow of information to non-members of the Security Council is a prerequisite for understanding and assessing how the Council is dealing with political issues and should therefore be strengthened. The presidency of the Security Council should play a crucial role in keeping the general membership fully informed about the Council's deliberations. The monthly forecast on the work of the Council constitutes a useful tool for all delegations. The briefings of the respective presidencies and the information they make available via their home pages have been further improved. The increase in the number of public meetings underlines the Council's willingness to take into account the views of Member States at large and to use them as input in the Council's decision-making process. We welcome the reduction in the number of closed meetings, as outlined by Ambassador Negroponte.

The inclusion in the report of a narrative overview of the work of the Security Council is a positive development. Its usefulness could be further increased with a more extensive analysis of the decision-making process in the Council. My delegation welcomes the efforts to streamline the report. Reducing the number of its pages makes the report not only more readable, but also more cost-effective.

The experience of peacekeeping operations has clearly underlined that the Council can act successfully only if it is engaged in a substantive dialogue with Member States. Austria, as a traditional provider of peacekeeping troops, particularly commends the Council for its efforts to increase the number of meetings with troop-contributing countries. Cooperation at an early stage between the Council and troop-contributing countries is essential when we consider new mandates for United Nations peacekeeping missions.

As a member of the Human Security Network, Austria welcomes the increased attention that the Security Council is devoting to the problems of civilians and children in armed conflicts and in post-conflict situations by holding open debates on those issues. The recent thematic Security Council meeting

on "Justice and the rule of law: the United Nations role" is a commendable initiative that should be continued in the near future.

Mr. Grey-Johnson (Gambia): My delegation very much appreciates the report of the Security Council (A/58/2) that is before us. It is comprehensive yet concise, and bears testimony to a year of hard work and high productivity. We commend all Council members for their dedication and effectiveness in the service of the Organization, and indeed of humanity at large.

Africa has dominated the work of the Council for yet another year. And once more, the Council has been able to show results. The United Nations involvement in Côte d'Ivoire has been made more robust with the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire, whose mandate is to assist in the full implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis peace Agreement. The situation in Liberia has been contained, and United Nations peacekeeping operations have commenced there with the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone has helped to consolidate the tremendous gains registered in Sierra Leone since the cessation of hostilities. In conflict zones elsewhere in Africa, the Council has indeed played its part and has responded well to the many challenges.

The Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins of Angola, continues to closely monitor the situation in Guinea-Bissau. It continues to work with the Economic and Social Council through that body's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau as well as with the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau to recommend courses of action to be followed in our bid to keep the country from retreating into conflict and to strengthen its political transition.

The President returned to the Chair.

The Council has shown much concern for the dire humanitarian situation prevailing in Guinea-Bissau as a result of poor economic performance and the withholding of aid. My delegation sincerely hopes that, with the new political developments in the country, the donor community will play its part to ensure that a change in attitude towards the country leads to the types of material and financial support necessary to eliminate the risk of upheaval, strife and conflict.

Overall, although conflicts appear to have simmered down in much of West Africa, their causes have not yet been completely removed. To be proactive in our efforts to prevent or resolve conflicts, we must begin to address their causes at the root. The Security Council and the Economic and Social Council should, together, begin to examine issues of governance, poverty, exclusion, corruption and other factors that bring about conflict in African countries.

My delegation welcomes the initiatives being taken to address the problem of small arms and light weapons. We call for similar measures to tackle the problem of mercenaries, whose prevalence in West Africa keeps countries in that subregion constantly in the shadow of war.

Cooperating with regional organizations, as the Council did with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the Liberian conflict, could be an efficient and cost-effective means of conflict resolution. The Council should consider resorting to it more. Furthermore, in cases where inadequate resources circumscribe the effectiveness of regional organizations, the Council should examine the possibilities of making the requisite outlays to enable them to operate more easily.

We hailed the publication of the Quartet's road map for the Middle East in the hope that it would usher in peace in that unfortunate region. However, rather than abating, the situation actually worsened significantly. The Security Council must continue to be patient, but it must also become more imaginative in its search for a solution to the problem in the Middle East. Ways must be found to realize the creation of a sovereign Palestinian State, side by side with a secure State of Israel.

Iraq dominated the Council's preoccupations during the reporting period, and, although the Council did its utmost to prevent war, war in fact did break out. My delegation strongly urges the Council to set its sights on the future and begin the necessary actions to bring the United Nations to the service of the people of Iraq, as well as to respond to their emergency humanitarian and development needs. The initial experience has been bitter, with the bombing that claimed the lives of Sergio Vieira de Mello and many of his colleagues, but it should not deter us.

My delegation calls upon the Council to review its policy on sanctions, whether smart sanctions or otherwise. In the majority of cases, they hurt only the

poor innocent civilians who invariably are the very victims of the situations that brought the sanctions about in the first place. Sanctions that have a negative impact on the health, education and nutritional status of the population are not, for any reason whatever, justifiable. In many cases, the real victims of sanctions are women, children, the aged and rural communities. We expect the Council Working Group on general issues relating to sanctions to conduct a comprehensive review of the effects of sanctions on vulnerable groups with a view to advising the Council — and indeed the general membership of the United Nations — as to their real impact and effectiveness.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's decision to set up a high-level panel of eminent personalities to make recommendations on the reform of the Organization. It is our sincere hope that the panel will thoroughly review the workings of the Security Council with a view to recommending concrete ways of reforming it, including with respect to the veto. The Council must mirror the realities of the world in the twenty-first century. It must also operate on the Charter principle of equitable representation.

Finally, let me commend the outgoing members of the Council for the invaluable service they have rendered, and, in the same vein, wish the incoming members a most successful and productive period of service.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador John Negroponte of the United States, for introducing the annual report of the Security Council (A/58/2).

Today's discussion of that important document has attracted the close attention of delegations. Last year, the Member States welcomed the improved format of the annual report, which was much shorter and, for the first time ever, contained an analytical overview in its introductory part. It marked the willingness of the Security Council to actively respond to the concerns expressed by Member States over the years. In that respect, we commend the United Kingdom and Spain for their great efforts to streamline this year's report and look forward to further improvements of its analytical part in coming General Assembly sessions.

The Security Council has made a significant contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. The report states that in the 12 months under review the trend towards a steady increase in the workload of the Council continued, along with an increase in the trend towards transparency. The Security Council maintained its busy agenda on Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan and other important issues.

The Iraq file dominated the attention of the Council during the period covered by this report. We encourage the efforts made by the Security Council to define the role of the United Nations in assisting the people of Iraq to rebuild their country and create a stable and secure environment.

Kazakhstan endorses the Security Council's continuing efforts to address ongoing conflicts. We believe that United Nations peacekeeping operations constitute one of the main elements of the maintenance of international peace and security. They are one of the key instruments available to the Security Council for the settlement of conflicts and disputes.

My delegation notes the efforts of the Security Council to increase transparency in its work by holding an increased number of public meetings. We support the thematic debates, which provide an opportunity for members and non-members of the Council to focus on issues of crucial importance. We must encourage those positive trends and try to take further steps in that direction.

However, we think that the continuing efforts of the Security Council in the field of peace and security would be more effective if it conducted more interactive discussions between the Council members and non-members. We wish to see a reformed Security Council, open to dialogue and sending the international community a clear message that it stands ready to meet the new challenges.

My delegation would like to express its appreciation to Ambassador Greenstock and to the present Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), Ambassador Arias, for their leadership in steering the activities of the Committee. The CTC has continued to work intensively to fulfil its mandate as set out in resolution 1373 (2001) by deepening its dialogue with Member States and with regional and subregional organizations. Kazakhstan is committed to supporting the CTC and to the effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). We hope that a multilateral approach will be taken in our future actions against international terrorism.

The Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) has continued to focus its work on the

need to address the threat to international peace and security posed by terrorism. Security Council resolution 1455 (2003) has enhanced the role of the Committee in a number of areas and has improved the implementation by Member States of the sanctions regime imposed on Al Qaeda, the Taliban and other associated groups and individuals. Kazakhstan is among 66 States that submitted their reports on the implementation of resolution 1455 (2003). My Government will continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and give all possible support to this important body.

Kazakhstan supports the continuing efforts by the sanctions committees to improve their working methods, thus increasing transparency and effective fulfilment of their mandates.

The reform of the Security Council is part of the commitment our leaders made during the Millennium Summit. For that reason, it is highly important to resume the negotiations on Security Council reform. We believe that at the fifty-eighth session the President will bring the negotiation process back to life in the Open-ended Working Group in order to reach a comprehensive package agreement on Council reform.

We also look forward to receiving recommendations from the Secretary-General on the main aspects of strengthening the United Nations system, including the reform of the Security Council, based on the work of the high-level panel that the Secretary-General intends to establish.

It is essential to strengthen the ability of the main United Nations body to respond effectively to the global challenges of the twenty-first century. We must work together to enable it to confront those challenges in the area of peace and security in a much more comprehensive and effective manner.

Mr. Maria Caceres (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The two items on our agenda — the report of the Security Council and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters — are very closely interrelated, and thus we consider that they have a common objective, namely, a more democratic, representative, transparent and more effective Security Council in the face of the challenges of today's world.

Allow me to congratulate the President of the Security Council for this month, the Permanent Representative of the United States, for his introduction of the annual report of the Council, and the delegations of the United Kingdom and Spain for having drafted the introduction, which is one of the most interesting sections of the report.

In this past year the Security Council has been through critical times and has had difficulties exercising the responsibilities that the Charter assigns to that body, an organ indispensable for the maintenance of international peace and security. Thus, the two items we are considering are more than ever before priorities on our agenda. Their consideration by Member States must not be a mere formality, but must be the reaffirmation of the responsibilities of this Assembly on issues of fundamental importance for the entire United Nations membership.

Member States have the right and duty to know and fully analyse the Council's work, since the Council acts on the behalf of all in accordance with the responsibilities granted to it by the Charter.

For the second consecutive year, the Security Council report to the Assembly shows considerable progress in terms of format and content, compared with previous reports. The introductory summary facilitates a better idea of the work, but the report does not yet exactly reflect the amount or the importance of the Council's work. Such efforts by the Council to improve its report must continue and be encouraged so that the report may truly be the useful and substantive document that all the Members would like, rather than a simple description of decisions that do not reflect the positions or discussions which took place in the Council.

We realize that in recent years there has been some progress in the Council's working methods that has led to greater transparency in the work. Efforts to hold more public meetings and the briefings by the President of the Council at the end of closed meetings represent considerable progress. Also, the public evaluation sessions at the end of the month and meetings with troop-contributing countries — most of which are not members of the Council — are meaningful steps forward which should be formalized. In addition, we highlight the briefings to non-members on the Council's travels to the field.

However, as can be seen from this report, it is still far from being the document we all desire. Most of the Council's deliberations take place during informal consultations behind closed doors. As an example, we believe that reports submitted by the Secretariat should

be considered in public meetings, with non-members invited to participate, rather than in meetings behind closed doors, as usually happens.

We also believe that after more than 50 years of provisional rules of procedure of the Council, the rules should become permanent, as is the case with the rules of other bodies of the United Nations.

Another issue that seems fundamental to us is improving communication and interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as with other organs of the Organization. In this connection, we think it is indispensable that the President of the Security Council submit to the General Assembly not only an annual report, but, whenever necessary, special reports, for instance on priority issues which emerge from current concerns or specific situations which are on the minds of all Member States, such as the events of recent months. This is in conformity with what is stipulated in Article 24 of the Charter.

We hope that the views expressed in this debate by Member States that are not members of the Security Council will be taken into account by the permanent members of the Council in order to improve the dialogue between the two bodies and to improve the Council's work.

The presentation of the report of the Council should not be a simple formality to comply with our agenda. It should be a genuine and sincere review of its activities, including difficulties encountered as the activities take place.

My delegation is of the view that in order to achieve true improvement in the work and activities of the Security Council, Council reform can no longer be postponed. This is the very objective pursued by the reform process. We would like to enhance the Council's efficiency and effectiveness and improve its working methods. The Council must be democratic, representative, fair, transparent and in keeping with the reality of today. It must respond to the entire membership of the United Nations. Its working methods must provide and demonstrate greater transparency and participation, and its composition should represent the political realities of today's world.

Paraguay understands that there is general agreement among Member States on the need to reform the Security Council. The position of Paraguay on this issue has been expressed on repeated occasions. It is necessary to expand both categories of members and to include developed countries as well as developing countries, bearing in mind especially that the latter are underrepresented at present.

Likewise, a key issue of the reform which must be analysed is the question of the veto power flaunted by the permanent members. We must aspire to gradual elimination of the veto power until it completely disappears. A first step should be to limit it strictly to questions under Chapter VII of the Charter. Likewise, we should leave open the possibility of a periodic review of the reform in order to consider the functioning of the Security Council in keeping with future realities and requirements.

Ten years after the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform, there has been very little progress on important questions so that the reform may be carried out. Today we must shoulder our responsibilities and take the political decision to show real progress and achieve the objectives desired by most Member States. In this connection, we place our confidence in the leadership of the President of the General Assembly, and we hope that, in the next few months, we will find a way to move this process forward and achieve the outcome that we all have anticipated for so long.

I should to conclude by saying that no reform of the United Nations will have the effect we all wish for without the long-awaited reform of the Security Council, so long as it does not take place we cannot really speak of a United Nations that is in keeping with the times in which we are living — one that will truly meet the interests and aspirations of the entire international community.

Mr. Chidumo (Mozambique): My delegation welcomes the debate on the report of the Security Council and on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

We thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador John Negroponte of the United States, for his introductory remarks on the work of the Security Council during the period under review.

The report of the Security Council contains an introductory section and a listing of meetings, communications received from Member States, and of resolutions and other decisions adopted by the Council.

We wish to take note of the rather new format of the report, with the hope that further work will be done to improve it in future.

The annual report should be more than a mere listing of meetings. More importantly, it should continue to strive to provide a detailed analytical account of the Council's proceedings and should contain substantive information on the environment in which discussions are held and on the decisions arrived at in the Security Council, as stated earlier by several speakers. Such a substantive report would contribute to a better understanding of Council affairs, enable Member States to take informed decisions and further bridge the gap between members and non-members of the Council.

This underlines the need for reform in order to ensure openness, inclusiveness, democratization, transparency and accountability, and to restore the credibility of the Security Council vis-à-vis Member States and world public opinion.

The report before us shows that the bulk of the work of the Security Council continued to be on Africa, with Iraq, the Middle East and terrorism as other areas of critical intervention. The Security Council should continue to work to ensure that its decisions on Africa are commensurate with the time and effort it dedicates to the continent. This includes acting as expeditiously as possible on any possible threat to peace and security on the continent. This would have been the recommended course of action, for instance, in cases such as that of Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For it to act in such a way would contribute to lessening the concerns expressed in the past by Member States with regard to specific conflicts that have emerged on our continent. The Council should not wait until a situation deteriorates to take action. Now that robust mandates have been decided by the Council, it is imperative to secure their implementation.

In the case of Liberia, within the framework of the implementation of the existing mandate, due attention should be given to the issue of the mercenary forces involved in that country's conflict, whose negative action is on record as having endangered peace processes elsewhere in West Africa. The inauguration of the Transitional Government, which took place recently, is an encouraging sign that the peace effort in Liberia, if properly supported, can and will be successful.

The recent positive developments in Burundi, which have enabled the signing of yet another important agreement between the Government and the National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), should be encouraged through the adoption by the Security Council of a draft resolution endorsing the African Mission in Burundi. An early involvement of the Security Council is not only desirable but also a necessity in order for it to support the African Union in its quest to settle the conflict in that country. By doing so, the Security Council would be meeting the expectations of the international community.

For all these reasons, reforming the Security Council is imperative. The democratization and expansion of that body should be accorded the highest priority in order to reflect the current geopolitical situation.

In his statement of 23 September 2003, the Secretary-General reminded us that the debate over the composition of the Security has been with us for over a decade, and that we almost all agree that the Council should be enlarged. He reminded us also that the difficulties we face in reaching agreement on this issue do not excuse our failure to do so. We could not agree more with the Secretary-General. The question is, are Member States ready to listen to the Secretary-General and to heed their own words?

In the process of reviewing the composition of the Security Council, the criteria for expansion should not be restrictive, but, rather, representative and equitable. In this context, we should not be oriented only by the military and economic power of the candidates. Other elements, such as moral authority, equitable geographical representation, the need to ensure fair representation of developing countries, and commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security should be taken into account.

In the current composition of the Security Council, Africa is the most underrepresented continent. We therefore reiterate the African position that, in order for Africa to have its fair share of seats on the Security Council, our continent should be allocated two permanent seats, with the same rights as the current permanent members, and two additional non-permanent seats.

The lack of progress in the decade-long debate over Security Council reform has done immense damage to the credibility of the Council itself. The

responsibility for breaking the prevailing stalemate lies entirely with those Member States that have so far failed to show the necessary political will, flexibility and pragmatism to come up with a new formula that accommodates everyone's interests.

The new challenges before the international community in the maintenance of international peace and security compel us all to combine our efforts towards undertaking the much-needed reforms. Let us seize the momentum and make a difference in the future of our Organization.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): In making some brief points on the annual report of the Security Council before the General Assembly, we must first comment on organizational matters that seem quite important to us. Like others, we are disappointed to see that the General Assembly has reverted to its old practice of having separate debates on the report of the Council and on Security Council reform. Given the overlap in substance between the two items and the good experience we had last year with a joint debate, we find it hard to understand this change in practice, especially in the light of the urgent need for the General Assembly to engage in a radical and effective reform.

The report itself is more concise and thus more accessible than on some occasions in the past. That is the result of an important effort by the Council and should help to advance the interaction between the two bodies, which we believe should become more substantial and meaningful over time. A number of useful suggestions have been made during the course of the debate. I would like in particular to refer to the statement made earlier by the representative of Paraguay.

The Council is clearly looking back at one of its most difficult years, due in particular to the profound disagreements among Council members on the right course of action concerning Iraq. Rarely has the work of the Council been followed with more public interest than in the past few months — and rarely have more people turned away from the Council in frustration and disappointment. The time has thus clearly come for us to rethink the established mechanisms in the area of international peace and security, and we are all indebted to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his initiative to establish a panel of eminent persons to launch and inspire this process.

We continue to believe very strongly in the transparency and accountability of the Council with regard to the membership as a whole. Again, the Council has taken important steps over the years in this area, fundamentally changing its relationship with States that are not members of the Council. The informal briefings and increasing number of open debates on a variety of topics are positive steps, and wrap-up sessions have also proved to be useful in this respect. At the same time, the character of the work of the Council has also changed, in that it takes increasingly far-reaching decisions, including decisions which directly affect the lives of individuals who have no means of recourse or appeal. It is thus all the more important that the Council be accountable for its decisions towards the membership as a whole — on behalf of which, after all, it is acting.

We warmly welcomed the initiative of the United Kingdom, during its presidency last month, to engage the Council in a process during which it will look closely into the issue of justice and the rule of law, without impinging on the role that other bodies will continue to play in this respect. Indeed, we believe that the imperative of the rule of law needs to be emphasized in the strongest possible terms — at both the national and international levels — at a time when multilateralism is more urgently needed and more forcefully challenged than ever.

As a guardian of the rule of law, the Council must also look into its own decisions and ensure that they are at all times fully consistent with the relevant provisions of international law, in particular, of course, the United Nations Charter. It is thus regrettable that during the past year the Council again made a decision that clearly does not fulfil that criterion by adopting resolution 1487 (2003). We believe that that resolution is likely to do damage to the credibility of the Council in the long term, and thus hope that it will refrain from renewing it next summer.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this agenda item.

I would like to inform representatives that, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 47/233, 48/264 and 51/241, I intend to make a summary of the debate on this agenda item immediately following the conclusion of our consideration of agenda item 56, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 11.

Agenda item 56

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): This debate is taking place at a critical moment for the Organization. Confidence in the capacity of the United Nations to resolve the most serious global problems has been weakened and damaged.

The international community is facing a number of difficult issues regarding the future of the multilateral and collective security system embodied by this Organization. It must either choose to trust the United Nations to resolve the most important global issues or conclude that the Organization is being brushed aside by the force of events.

The international community must respond to this challenge through a process of sincere and profound reflection. We do not have all of the answers, but we are convinced that the one idea that cannot be called into question is respect for the guiding principle that led to the birth of the United Nations: a democratic commitment by all of the peoples of the world to peace and security.

Despite the fact that that objective has not been fully achieved, that idea has had sufficient power to keep this Organization alive for more than half a century. It is an objective that is shared by the countries from all continents, cultures and civilizations that together make up the United Nations.

It is clear that in order to reaffirm that objective and turn the United Nations into an effective instrument, the Organization must be reformed. Likewise, it is evident that the reform exercise must render it even more democratic and reaffirm its legitimacy and its ability to bring people together.

That democratic commitment cannot be overlooked when it comes to the reform of the Security Council. Fifty years have elapsed since the system of collective security was defined. The international system is not the same today as it was in 1945. When the United Nations was created, a system was established according to which five Powers had a privileged position with regard to collective security. That was not democratic, and Argentina questioned it at the time. It was a response, however, to a particular balance of power. Today, the balance of power is radically different.

We need to reform the Security Council, which has lost a great deal of its representative capacity and effectiveness. The paradox, however, is that some of the proposals that we have heard about during the reform exercise, rather than making that body more democratic, advocate the retention of privileges and the creation of new ones.

Today we are witness to a Council in which very delicate issues — issues that affect global peace and that could lead to the endangering of key principles of international law and have a serious impact on the United Nations — are discussed in an exclusive and exclusionary manner by the permanent members. Transparency is absent from the Council — even for most of its members.

Nevertheless, some proposals claim that the solution is to create new permanent members. Some propose increasing the number of permanent members, with new members having the same rights as current members; that is to say, with the privilege of the veto. They argue that some countries aspiring to that category of membership in fact contribute more to the Organization and are more powerful, than some of the permanent members that obtained the privilege of the veto in 1945.

Others, being more resigned — or more realistic — would be happy with a permanent seat without the privilege of the veto. Should that idea prevail, we would have a Security Council with three classes of members, much like passengers on a plane. Some — the five permanent members — would travel first class. Others — permanent members without the right of the veto — would travel in business class. Lastly, non-permanent members would travel in coach. Can that classification stand up to the test of legitimacy and equity? Could the peoples of the United Nations referred to in the preamble to the Charter trust an organization based on such new inequalities?

A few days ago, while addressing the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, I said that "the legitimacy lent by the United Nations is its principal asset" (*A/58/PV.25*). We believe that we cannot tamper with that asset, as it is what justifies the very existence of the United Nations.

There is no justification for the current aristocratic structure of the Security Council. No reasons have been

cited to convince us that a solution of that nature would bring more legitimacy and effectiveness to the United Nations. The least democratic and least transparent body of the United Nations will not be improved if we accentuate its lack of democracy.

It should be recalled that, as Article 24 of the Charter sets out, those who make up the Security Council represent us all, and not themselves alone. It should also be understood that we elect them periodically and democratically to act in our name, and that their representative character and the temporary nature of their mandates provide our guarantee. It is for that reason that, like many other countries, Argentina maintains that in enlarging the Security Council it is necessary to increase the number of non-permanent members, which are the ones who represent us with greater authenticity, and over which we may exercise greater control. Not to understand that would take us back five decades. It would be an assault on the idea of democracy, upon which we based ourselves 50 years ago so that we could live together in peace.

We understand that reforming the Security Council cannot be a partial undertaking; nor can it fail to address the veto and the prevailing position of some of its members. The working methods, transparency, informal meetings and practices of the Council should be addressed and resolved along with the question of the enlargement of its membership.

My country has always maintained that there is a need to eliminate the veto. However, in order to be realistic and to make a constructive effort, we accept postponing that goal for the moment and limiting the veto to issues falling under Chapter VII of the Charter for the time being.

We have worked for 10 years in the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group to try to find a solution to this issue. That work has reflected the points of view of all nations, since all of them have been represented in the Group. No country has been excluded. It cannot be said that the results achieved by the Working Group do not clearly reflect the thinking of the international community as a whole. If there was no agreement in the Group, it was because no such agreement exists among nations. That agreement will not exist until we accept that the Security Council's non-permanent membership must be enlarged and that the veto should be, at the very least, restricted.

Today it is possible to look at all the possible ways of finding alternatives. We can, and should, engage the thoughts of the international community to come up with other formulas. We therefore welcome the concerns of the Secretary-General, as well as his decision to establish a group of thinkers. This is a crucial moment, and it is necessary to summon all points of view in this exercise. But it should be clear that the result of this effort should be reviewed by the General Assembly, which is the only body that can take a decision on reform.

Forcing the issue by taking the solution to this problem out of the hands of the General Assembly and its Working Group is what should not happen. We do not believe that there can be a solution that does not emerge from consensus, or that has a goal other than making the Security Council more democratic and more effective. Argentina will participate in a conciliatory spirit to achieve those goals.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): Let me first of all thank the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Jan Kavan of the Czech Republic, for his work in efficiently conducting the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform during the previous session. I also express my gratitude to Ambassador Ingólfsson of Iceland and Ambassador Kasemsarn of Thailand for their preparation of the Working Group's comprehensive report. It is a pity that we are losing those able colleagues from the Working Group, as both are leaving New York. I sincerely wish them success in their future endeavours.

In the process of discussing the situation in Iraq over the past year, questions have been raised as to the effectiveness of the Security Council with regard to its primary role of maintaining international peace and security. Those questions added greater momentum to the discussion on the need for Security Council reform than we have seen before. In his address to member countries at the opening of the general debate during this session of General Assembly, Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that

> "If you want the ... Council's decisions to command greater respect, particularly in the developing world, you need to address the issue of its composition with greater urgency." (*A/58/PV.7, p. 4*)

Statements from Member States followed in the general debate, and more than two-thirds of them

touched upon the need for United Nations reform, including that of the Security Council. That figure strongly indicates the increasing momentum on this issue.

On reviewing the discussions in the Working Group, which started 10 years ago, it is regrettable that we do not see any significant progress or any way out of the deadlock, despite the fact that the necessary elements to reach general agreement on Security Council reform are already on the table. Former President Kavan stated in his summary of the responses to the informal questionnaire that, "with one exception, all Member States that responded found the movement of the Working Group unsatisfactory".

Japan also expresses its strong dissatisfaction with the current lack of progress in the Working Group. We have to recognize that most of the responsibility for the stalemate lies with the Working Group itself.

Leaving the current situation as it is will call into question the ability of the United Nations to adjust itself to challenges in the world. As the Working Group is the only body established by the General Assembly to discuss Security Council reform, we must make our utmost effort to achieve concrete results in the Working Group during this session. Japan believes that, if we cannot make any progress in the next meeting of the Working Group, it may be necessary to review the way the Working Group manages its discussions. In that connection, Japan looks forward to the leadership of the new President, Mr. Julian Hunte, as Chairman of the Working Group, and of its new Bureau. I should also like to add that Japan will try its best to present new ideas to assist in the process and to promote discussion in the Working Group.

I would be remiss if I failed to mention the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a high-level panel of eminent personalities. Japan supports that initiative and will be following developments with great interest. Although it is the Member States that can take firm and clear decisions, as the Secretary-General pointed out in his statement, I expect substantive recommendations to be made with regard to United Nations reforms that address Security Council reform in particular. Japan intends to contribute as much as possible to this initiative.

The Secretary-General also makes a strong case for United Nations reform in his report on implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/58/323). He proposes that we set 2005 as a deadline for reaching agreement on the changes that are needed in our international institutions if they are to meet the new challenges, because 2005 not only marks the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations but is also the year in which a review of progress in implementing the Millennium Declaration will take place. Japan takes that proposal very seriously. Japan believes — as our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, said in her statement during the general debate, on 23 September (see A/58/PV.8) — that a political decision should be taken on the occasion of such a review by holding a meeting of heads of State or Government regarding reform of the United Nations, and of the Security Council in particular.

The perpetuation of the same basic Security Council structure as that of 60 years ago leads many to question the legitimacy of the system under which the United Nations operates. I should like to urge that all Member States take concrete action to strengthen the functioning of the Organization and thereby to restore its legitimacy. Japan reaffirms its determination to play a positive role to that end.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Once again, for the eleventh consecutive year, the General Assembly is considering the issue of reforming the Security Council and expanding its membership. I do not wish to reiterate the positions that our statements have reflected over the past 10 years. Of course, certain parameters of the Egyptian position remain unchanged: we endorse the position of the Non-Aligned Movement with regard to expanding Council membership — reiterated at non-aligned summit conferences in 1995, 1996 and 1997 — that the Council should comprise at least 26 permanent and non-permanent members, with the possibility of expanding the non-permanent membership. That is in addition to improvements in the Council's working methods based on mutual understanding. Egypt also fully supports the African position, expressed at the Harare Summit, calling for seven African seats — including two permanent seats — on an expanded Council, with those two seats held on a rotating basis.

I wish to recall General Assembly resolution 53/30, adopted in November 1998, which stipulated that any resolution or decision on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

would require the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of the Assembly, in conformity with Article 108 of the Charter. The Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform is prepared to reconsider this issue. However, there are a number of questions that we consider crucial if we wish the Working Group's deliberations to be truly successful. Among those essential questions are the following.

First, does the extreme slowness of the Working Group's deliberations mean that Member States accept the Council's working methods and mechanisms as they currently exist, or is there an underlying awareness of the need for reform of those working methods?

Secondly, should we wait for double standards and selectivity to become the Security Council's standard practice when it addresses international peace and security issues, or is it time for the Council to consider all threats to international peace and security on an equal footing, whatever the parties involved or whatever the prevailing political balances?

Thirdly, does the Council's current composition truly and accurately reflect the existing strategic balance, or is it true that, over approximately the past 60 years, certain forces have emerged while others have receded, and certain blocs have collapsed while others have appeared — and that all those realities need to be taken into account in the Council?

Fourthly, can the Council, as currently composed, truly maintain international peace and security?

Fifthly, is the Council truly carrying out the mission entrusted to it under the Charter in accordance with the principles established by the Charter — that is, the principles of international law and the rules of justice?

Sixthly, and most important — has the experience of the past six months demonstrated that the Security Council is truly an effective instrument for ensuring international peace and security and for guaranteeing the independence and sovereignty of States, or has it demonstrated the Council's weakness and the urgent need for reform?

In addition to those questions — which directly concern the Council and its performance — there are others of more general import that we, as Members of the United Nations, need to answer before we can agree on any expansion of the Council. Among those questions, I would note the following.

First, do the current balance of power and the role played by various parties make it possible to reform and expand the Council in a balanced manner so as to guarantee the rights of developing and developed countries on equal footing, or will the current international situation lead to the creation of a Council that is even more paralysed and less capable of acting than the current one?

Secondly, do we all really want to see simultaneous reform of and increase in the membership of the Council, or do some of us want only to expand the Council, others simply to reform it and still others neither to reform nor expand it?

Thirdly, do all parties demonstrate genuine political will and determination to agree on a package for the reform and expansion of the Council that combines justice in seat distribution and in the representation of all regional groups, while guaranteeing the Council's transparency, objectivity and neutrality?

In Egypt's statement today, we sought more to ask questions than to provide answers. I hope that these questions will give rise to a serious debate on the underlying philosophy of reform and on our real goals. Indeed, we fear that the last 10 years of debate in the Working Group may have added more confusion to the issue of reform.

Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): The issue the Assembly is discussing today is clearly one of the most important items on its agenda, namely, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. We have been informed of the outcome of the lengthy meetings and debates that were conducted by the Working Group since last year. I would like to express our admiration to Mr. Jan Kavan, the former Chairman, and his two Vice-Chairs for their efforts and for having presided over the discussions so well.

The discussions in the Working Group have demonstrated the urgent need to reorganize the Security Council and to give greater transparency to its working methods. All the working papers submitted by many countries and organizations from the various regional groups to the Working Group and its Chairman agreed that Council reform is necessary to strengthen that body's ability to maintain international peace and security and to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Despite agreement among Member States on the principles of reform and change, the Working Group, after 10 years, has been unable to agree on the nature of the changes in question, on the number of seats by which to increase the membership or on how to improve the working methods of the Council. It is regrettable that the debates of the past few years have been repetitive. We are in a vicious circle; we must all think seriously about how to revitalize the mechanisms of the Working Group itself.

But we cannot ignore the progress that has taken place in the Working Group's discussions, especially as regards the Council's working methods. There is near-general agreement on a number of measures and provisions that the Council should adopt. Furthermore, the Council itself has already started to implement certain methods and procedures. But we are only at the beginning of this process, and we stress that we support the Secretary-General's invitation to invest this item with the greatest possible importance so that decisions would have wider acceptance, especially by developing countries.

Kuwait has repeatedly stated its position on the increase in the membership of the Council and on improving its working methods. We have done so unilaterally and through various groups, in particular the Arab Group and the Non-Aligned Movement. The Assembly's debate on this item provides us with a good opportunity to stress the following fundamental principles.

First, Kuwait supports an increase in the Security Council membership, provided that this is moderate, with a view to preserving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council's work and decision-making in the face of challenges to international peace and security.

Second, the increase should be consistent with the principles of the sovereign equality of Member States and equitable geographical representation; it must also reflect the global character of the United Nations.

Third, with regard to the increase of permanent seats in the Security Council, we support a limited increase and consider that such seats should go to countries that have truly demonstrated, in their relationship with the United Nations, the ability to discharge primary responsibilities, such as maintenance of international peace and security, and to fulfil the purposes and principles of the Charter in the economic, social, political and cultural arenas. Countries should be elected to these additional seats by the members of the General Assembly, in accordance with agreed criteria and procedures.

Fourth, with regard to the reform and improvement of the working methods of the Council, we favour proposals that would promote greater transparency and a freer two-way flow of information between the Council and the United Nations membership at large. In this context, we stress the importance of implementing measures adopted by the Security Council itself to improve its working methods, without waiting for agreement on other issues such as the size and composition of the Council and the decision-making process.

Fifth, we favour the retention of the current method of selecting the non-permanent members on the basis of Article 23, paragraph 2, of the Charter, so that smaller countries have a greater opportunity to gain membership and to contribute to the Council's work.

Sixth, with regard to the veto, bearing in mind the difficulty and sensitivity of the issue, we note that the discussions in the Working Group show that there is near-unanimous agreement on the need to limit and restrict the use of the veto power. There are many important proposals in that connection, which require further consideration. We hope that it will be possible to reach a consensus that is acceptable to all countries and that would help the Council carry out its duties.

Finally, we stress our support for the decision of the Secretary-General to establish a group of eminent personalities to consider and review the working methods of the principal organs of the United Nations, as we hope this will help to generate the necessary momentum to reach consensus on the Security Council reform, so that the Council can best maintain international peace and security and deal with the challenges of the next century.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): Today's debate addresses one of the most controversial issues on the United Nations reform agenda: the Security Council. As last week's debate underscored, the Security Council must also be strengthened substantially and made more efficient and effective for United Nations reform to be truly significant and complete. In other words, we need a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

Italy's position on the issue of Security Council composition is well known. We strongly believe that

the current reform process should aim at enhancing the Council's effectiveness and representative character, together with its legitimacy and credibility. Our conviction has been reinforced by the Secretary-General's report on the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration.

Like many other United Nations members, we believe that the creation of new permanent seats would not be in keeping with these objectives. As was stated last week and again today, that would create new centres of privilege. This would, therefore, go against the tide of history, in which priority is given, and has to be given, to an ongoing process of democratization in the handling and the management of international relations through multilateral institutions, so that every Member State, every member of this Assembly, will feel more adequately represented and taken on board.

Would this happen with the establishment of new permanent members which would not be accountable to the electoral scrutiny of the membership? Certainly not. And it would neither enhance the Council's legitimacy and representative character, nor improve the effectiveness of its actions. Indeed, new permanent members endowed with veto power would undoubtedly make it more difficult for the Council to swiftly define and implement collective actions, impairing the effectiveness of the Council's decision-making process and increasing the risk of inaction. Comprehensive reform of the Security Council should, therefore, also address the power and the exercise of veto.

On the other hand, the proposal aired by some to add new permanent members without the right to veto also entails serious drawbacks and would not increase the cohesion of United Nations membership. It would create further division in the Council membership and establish a new layer of hierarchy that would be detrimental to the United Nations. Do we really want to have a first-class membership, a second-class membership and a third-class membership? The United Nations is not a corporate concern, a company or a fund listed on a stock exchange, with class A, class B and class C shares.

Moreover, let us be clear that any enlargement of the Security Council, regardless of the composition it assumes, will be limited in number. The figure generally mentioned is between 20 and 25 or 26 members. With a higher number of members, the Security Council would not be effective and efficient. What would result, it should be clear to all Member States, would be a zero-sum game. If we increase the number of permanent members, there will be less room for the rest of the membership who agree to the non-permanent seats. We would give, let us suppose, to five Member States, who would become permanent members, and thereby take away from what the remaining Member States have the right to expect regarding the possibility for them to offer a direct contribution to shape the Security Council's actions and policies.

We are all aware that the regional groups are deeply divided over which of their countries should be elevated to permanent member status and are also aware that they cannot agree on objective political criteria for selection. Ten years of debate have demonstrated that these irreconcilable differences, which are deeply rooted in the geopolitical and historical realities of each continent, do not make the identification of new permanent members an option within reach.

The United Nations membership might decide that, after 10 years of debate, it is now time to reach agreement on a formula that can build on common ground and therefore be capable of gathering the greatest support within the General Assembly. If so, the only realistic formula would be a limited increase in the number of non-permanent members, for the time being.

Such an enlargement of the Council would increase its representative character and, indeed, the legitimacy of its actions in the eyes of the international community. An increase of elective seats would facilitate Council access and participation for all United Nations Member States. Furthermore, greater legitimacy of Council decisions would make their implementation more prompt, thus enhancing the overall effectiveness of the Council.

On the issue of representation, let me recall that back in 1993, Italy tabled a specific proposal, according to which countries that shoulder the greatest responsibilities in the maintenance of peace and security, as well as for other purposes of our Organization, could participate more frequently in the work of the Council. That proposal remains on the table. One could also contemplate a review of the current ban on the immediate re-election of non-permanent members.

In light of the strong appeal launched by the Secretary-General on the need to reform the Security Council to enable it to face the new global challenges

to peace and security, Italy, of course, is also open to working with other countries on possible innovative formulas, provided that they are balanced and reflect the basic principles that inspire our approach.

Still in my national capacity, let me add a few comments on the European Union profile in the Security Council. The more the European Union becomes a strong and cohesive international subject, the more it will be able to provide valuable inputs to the United Nations in general and to shaping Security Council deliberations.

The recently signed Joint Declaration on European Union-United Nations cooperation in crisis management is an example of the European Union's determination to enhance its role in peace- and security-related issues at the United Nations and to help the Organization achieve its goals.

We are working to fully implement European Union-coordinated actions within international organizations, pursuant to the relevant European Union Treaty provisions. Realism should not prevent us from looking forward. This process must be approached gradually, incrementally and consensually. It is our hope that the European Union will progressively enhance its capacity to contribute to an effective multilateralism centred on the United Nations.

During the recent general debate in the General Assembly, our political leaders expressed their strong commitment to reforming multilateral institutions. We now have to work to translate those pledges into effective and realistic measures that include Security Council reform. It is essential to maintain a link between political statements and their implementation and follow up. In taking an incremental approach to new action and reforms, let us identify, with realism and pragmatism, the areas where there is common ground and, on that basis, start to move forward.

May I recall what the representative of Jamaica said: let us cut the talk and walk the walk. I agree with that.

Mr. Katti (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to echo some ideas developed by the Secretary-General in his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, adopted by the United Nations in September 2000, particularly with regard to peace and security and thus the role of the Security Council.

First of all, there is an urgent need for the international community to reach agreement based on a programme of common security that should reflect overall consensus on the main threats to peace and security.

Secondly, it is important not to shirk from the necessity to improve, indeed change, if need be, the structure and functions of the United Nations and other international institutions to better meet present needs.

Finally, the strength of the Organization lies in its legitimacy as enshrined in the fundamental principles of international law. If, consequently, the Security Council is to gain the broadest possible support for its decisions and to be able to best fulfil its responsibilities, it must be more representative and reflect the geopolitical reality of the world today.

Three crucial ideas therefore underpin the advancement of peace and security: a common security programme; adjustment of the structures and functions of the Organization; and the legitimacy of the activities of the Organization and the need to reform the Security Council, which remains, despite the crises and critical times being faced by our Organization, the main guarantor of the maintenance of international peace and security.

We understand all the more the analysis and statement made by the Secretary-General with respect to the need for improvement — indeed change — of the structure and functions of the Organization, which is now crucial for the credibility and very survival of the United Nations — something that we have always called for.

Past experience, with its setbacks and disappointments, makes us nevertheless more guarded with regard to the possibility of thoroughly reforming the Security Council, given the many obstacles and the sometimes insufficient political will. Twenty-four years ago, the issue of reforming the Security Council was put on the agenda of the thirty-fourth General Assembly session at the request of some 10 delegations, including my own. But we had to wait for the forty-eighth session for the General Assembly to decide to establish an Open-ended Working Group, with a clearly defined mandate under resolution 48/26, to consider all aspects of the issue of reforming the Security Council. We would be greatly remiss were we to depart from that approach.

The Millennium Declaration, for its part, highlighted in a timely way the need to reform the

Security Council to give it the needed legitimacy and representativeness to achieve its mission. We hope that the issue of reforming the Security Council will continue to be considered in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions, in strict compliance with the principles of transparency and all-inclusive participation.

In statements before the Working Group on the reform of the Security Council, throughout these meetings and those of the fifty-seventh session, I have pointed out that for the last 10 years the same delegations have been meeting, almost at the same time and same place, to reiterate their countries' respective positions, as if we were running out of imagination and creativity. I had attributed the lack of progress more to the absence of political will than to the working methods of our group. My opinion remains unchanged.

With regard to the position of my country on the reform of the Security Council, which is rather well known, I would like to stress that despite the improvement in the functioning and working methods of the Security Council, the Council has not produced the final version of its rules of procedure so as to prevent arrangements concerning diverse measures and positive changes from being subject to the whims of any one Council member. Moreover, despite concerted efforts and results achieved, we nevertheless note that, regrettably, closed meetings, where important issues are dealt with and decisions affecting Member States are made, continue to be the usual practice, whereas they should be the exception, and that those that have the exorbitant veto power continue to decide among themselves in advance the final outcome of the Council's deliberations.

My delegation also regrets that whereas the Security Council, under Article 24, paragraph 2 of the Charter, "shall act in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations", some Council members act as if they had no other intention than to defend and promote their own national interests. My delegation also believes that the Security Council must continually and regularly consult with the States directly or indirectly involved in conflict situations that are being discussed in the Council, and with regional and subregional organizations.

The Council should also take measures to make more effective use of Article 50 of the Charter on the right of any State to consult the Security Council if it finds itself confronted with problems arising from the carrying out of measures — preventive or enforcement — taken by the Council. Finally, the Security Council must commit itself to achieving its mandate as defined by the Charter and must not exercise any function not explicitly entrusted to it by the Charter. It is not its role to legislate. That falls to the Member States. It is not its role to deal with economic and social issues. That falls to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Its main responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security. That issue is so arduous, complex and demanding that the Council should devote its full attention to it without getting sidetracked.

We believe that the re-appropriation by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council of their prerogatives, which in no way compete with those of the Security Council but rather complement them, is the first step in any exercise in reform of the United Nations. It is therefore important to give full weight to the provisions of the Charter in restoring a balance between the various bodies of the United Nations.

Finally, I would like to note that, in general, with regard to working methods, there is a broad consensus to promote greater transparency and effectiveness of the Security Council, and that consequently, it would perhaps be fitting to finalize that consensus before it disintegrates.

Such finalizing of the agreement on the working methods and transparency of the work of the Council is all the more desirable given that no agreement seems to be emerging concerning the size of the Council and its composition, other than on the criteria for choosing new permanent members. There is even less agreement on the issue of the veto, which my delegation still considers an unacceptable anachronism.

I do not intend to spell out again the position of my country on all these substantive issues, but I would like nevertheless to reaffirm the support of my delegation for the specific proposals made by the Non-Aligned Movement, in particular the proposals concerning the increase in the number of Council members, which stems from the will to increase the representativeness and effectiveness of that important organ.

I would also like to stress that any enlargement of the membership of the Security Council must take into consideration the demand of Africa, as it was put

forward at the African Union Summit, held in Harare in 1997, and reiterated many times by my delegation, along with many other African delegations.

If the serious challenges facing the Security Council during the past year have shaken our Organization and impaired its image and prestige, they have also been a wake-up call for Member States to make a serious effort at reform of the Organization as a whole. The challenge will clearly be daunting, especially with respect to the Security Council, but what is at stake today is the very survival of our Organization.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): During the current session, the statements of many Member States and the Secretary-General clearly highlighted the need for urgent reform of the United Nations. The Russian Federation continues to believe that a strong and effective United Nations is a key instrument for collectively regulating international relations and establishing a multipolar world order based on the Charter and international law. This is especially pertinent today when the international community is seeking to develop a comprehensive strategy to counter new threats and challenges.

Reform of the Security Council must be geared towards strengthening the potential of this key organ for the sake of effective implementation of its terms of reference as enshrined in the Charter. We are sympathetic to the concerns of many delegations over the slow pace of progress in reforming the Security Council — reform that would allow the membership of that organ to better reflect current international realities. We also believe that given the deep disagreement among States on that specific issue, work must be done step by step and cautiously. As President Vladimir Putin of Russia said at the opening of the present General Assembly session, "... we should be guided above all by the broadest possible agreement on all aspects of the expansion of the Council ..." (*A/58/PV.11*). We must not allow a split in the United Nations to occur over this issue, which is so important to many States and the entire Organization.

Russia is prepared to continue with the painstaking work of overcoming differences of opinion, primarily on the key aspect of the future composition of the Security Council. We are open to any constructive proposals regarding the expansion of the membership in all categories, on the understanding that any increase should include both developed and developing States, which must be accorded equal rights and assigned equal duties.

In this context, the Russian Federation believes that Germany, Japan, India and Brazil, as well as a State representing Africa, would be worthy candidates for any additional permanent seats as might be created in the Security Council. That approach would ensure an adequate balance of interests among the members and strengthen the trend towards consensus within the Council.

We believe that any proposal that would lead to a reduction in the prerogatives and powers of the current permanent members of the Security Council, including the right of veto, would be counterproductive. Unjustified and baseless criticism of the veto only creates unnecessary tension, which is not conducive to reaching the desired agreement with regard to the parameters of the reform effort.

With regard to the question of according the right of veto to any new permanent members, it would be wise to leave any such consideration until after agreement has been reached on the specific membership of an expanded Security Council. In this respect, it will be important to keep the Council to a manageable size, since too large an increase in the membership could have a negative impact on the productivity and effectiveness of that body.

On the basis of that consistent position, Russia will continue to participate constructively in efforts to reach an agreement that commands maximum support on the reform of the Council, within, inter alia, the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly. The activities of that Group should continue to be carried out on the basis of the agreed parameters, including the principle of consensus and the cluster approach. We must also consider those recommendations that may be made on Security Council reform by the Secretary-General as a result of the work of the panel of eminent persons. We hope that those recommendations will duly take into account the existing approaches to this problem and the interests of various States, as well as of the United Nations as a whole. Ultimately, it is the General Assembly that will have to take a decision on that matter.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that the reform of the Security Council will be successful only if the end result is not division, but greater unity among States with regard to that unique organ, which bears, on behalf of all of the Members of the United Nations, the primary responsibility for the maintenance of

international peace and security. Russia will continue to do everything it can to help to achieve that goal.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): I would like at the outset, Sir, to express appreciation for the work performed by your predecessor in the presidency, Jan Kavan, as chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council, as well as by the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Thorsteinn Ingólfsson and Ambassador Chuchai Kasemsarn, who, during the past year, very ably conducted the business of that Group.

The Chairman displayed a commendable readiness to accept proposals and take initiatives with a view to carrying the process forward. Particularly worthy of mention are the initiative proposing a questionnaire on the work and methods of the Working Group and the idea of circulating an informal summary of the results, which provided us with a convenient reference regarding these questions. The decision to filter out of the working documents all proposals with no identified sponsors was also useful and timely, and resulted in a considerably streamlined report. Yet, despite the fact that it has been 10 years since it was established, the Working Group has regrettably not lived up to the expectations that led to its creation.

From our perspective, the lack of results is by no means discouraging. The issues are indeed complex and involve many difficulties, but this should not distract us from continuing to seek institutional developments that adequately reflect the political and security realities of the twenty-first century and that can thus better represent our own views and interests. The need for such reform has existed for many years, but its urgency was underscored by the grievous international developments we witnessed this year. As President Lula da Silva pointed out in his address to the General Assembly on 23 September,

> "Reform of the United Nations has become an urgent task, given the present risks to the international political order .... [The Security Council's] composition, in particular as concerns permanent membership, cannot remain unaltered almost 60 years later. It can no longer ignore the changing world. More specifically, it must take into account the emergence on the international scene of developing countries. They have become important actors that often exercise a critical role in ensuring the pacific settlement of disputes". (*A/58/PV.7, p. 6*)

The events that have taken place this year on the international scene have given rise to new challenges for the international community, not the least of which are those stemming from new security strategies. They have brought into question the adequacy and effectiveness of the rules and instruments at our disposal, prompting the Secretary-General, in paragraph 91 of his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration (A/58/323), to express the view that

> "Member States need ... to take a hard look at the existing 'architecture' of international institutions and to ask themselves whether it is adequate for the tasks we have before us".

That pressing need is made clear by the Secretary-General in several other passages in that report, as well as in his report on the work of the Organization (A/58/1).

In the specific case of the Security Council, the Secretary-General's diagnosis also points to a perceived lack of legitimacy in that organ's decisions, in particular "in the eyes of the developing world, which feels that its views and interests are insufficiently represented among the decision-takers" (*A/58/323, para. 96*). He goes on to state that "The composition of the Security Council — unchanged in its essentials since 1945 — seems at odds with the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century" (*ibid.*).

Brazil is certainly in agreement with that appraisal. The very existence of new challenges to the international order is a matter of paramount concern for all, and should propel us forward, both in preserving the commonly agreed purposes and principles of international conduct enshrined in the Charter, and in redoubling our efforts aimed at reforming the Organization, in particular the Security Council. In this respect, we support the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a high-level panel of eminent personalities charged with, among other duties, recommending ways of strengthening the United Nations through reform of its institutions and processes. We note with satisfaction the fact that more than 130 of the heads of State or Government, ministers for foreign affairs and others who attended this year's general debate heeded the Secretary-

General's call and expressed their willingness to contribute to bringing the process of reform to fruition.

The Open-ended Working Group should carry on working with a view to fulfilling its mandate. Although on major issues general agreement has so far been elusive, its work on procedural and practical matters has yielded important results, thereby helping the process. The work of the Working Group could continue in parallel with that of the panel, which should present its report to the General Assembly next year.

As work proceeds in the coming months, let us keep in mind the Secretary-General's words in plenary on 23 September:

> "I respectfully suggest to you, Excellencies, that in the eyes of your peoples the difficulty of reaching agreement does not excuse your failure to do so. If you want the Council's decisions to command greater respect, particularly in the developing world, you need to address the issue of its composition with greater urgency." *(see A/58/PV.7)*

It is high time for the international community squarely to confront the question of reform of the principal organs of the United Nations, in order for them better to respond to the world's needs. The Secretary-General has pointed the way forward; let us take it.

Mr. Fadaifard (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to begin by thanking the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council, his two Vice-Chairmen and members of the Bureau for their outstanding work over the past year and, in particular, for their leadership and patience during the discussions of the Working Group during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

Mr. President, we are pleased that you will be guiding deliberations on this critically important issue during the next session of the Working Group. We are confident that your diplomatic skill and your commitment will enable us to make tangible progress in the work of the Group this year.

Ten years have elapsed since the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Security Council. While the Group has made considerable progress in some areas of the mandate laid down by the General Assembly in 1993, the thorough and exhaustive debates that have been held to date have proved that there remain significant differences on such substantive matters as the size and composition of the Security Council, especially as concerns an increase in the permanent membership and the right of veto. In other words, the fundamental question — how to advance from the Security Council which we have now to an organ which is more representative and democratic, but no less efficient — has yet to be answered.

Nonetheless, despite the seeming stalemate on so-called cluster I issues, the Working Group managed to have a positive impact on the Council's working methods. Some of the recommendations formulated in the Open-ended Working Group over the years could be adopted and implemented by the members of the Council and, as a result, we can say that the Council is now conducting its work somewhat more transparently than in the early 1990s.

In our opinion, further progress on cluster II issues, including on modalities for the holding of meetings and consultations with directly interested and troop-contributing countries, are required in order to ensure increased accessibility and transparency.

In the meantime, and given the lack of progress on cluster I issues, it is worth reaffirming the fallback position maintained by the Non-Aligned Movement, namely that, if agreement is not reached on the expansion of the permanent membership, then the expansion should be limited, for the present, to the non-permanent seats.

As to the objectives of the reform of the Council, we continue to believe that the objective of the reform process is, and must remain, to make the Council more representative, more democratic, more transparent and more accountable, thereby helping to strengthen its legitimacy, efficiency and authority. That requires taking into account the dramatic changes that have taken place since the creation of the United Nations 58 years ago, such as the end of the colonial era, resulting in the increasing weight of the developing countries, and the end of the cold war. We believe that the attainment of those objectives requires, among other things, that the membership of the Council be expanded to at least 26, in order better to represent the developing world.

Moreover, the opinion of the vast majority of States Members of the United Nations — which continue to express their dissatisfaction at the use of the veto, as an undemocratic instrument, in the decision-making process

of the Security Council — should be heeded. The general support for limiting and curtailing the use of the veto, with a view to its eventual elimination, needs to be explicitly reflected in the final outcome of the Working Group's efforts.

We believe that the interests of all States and regions should be seriously considered in this unprecedented and historic exercise, which is also crucially important for the future of the United Nations and of international relations. Therefore, the process of reform of the Council should not be subject to any predetermined timetable. Any attempt to force a premature decision could do the Organization more harm than good.

We are of the view that, due to importance of Council reform, and on the basis of the principle of equality of all Member States, every effort should be made to reach the broadest possible agreement among Member States. We fully agree that all Member States should intensify their efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects, which include enlargement, decision-making and the related question of veto, as well as working methods, as reiterated by our heads of State and Government in the Millennium Declaration. However, we believe that we need to proceed with extreme prudence with respect to the new proposals put forward in recent years, including during this session's general debate.

While setting a deadline for, and convening a summit to deal with, reform of the Security Council could give rise to helpful momentum, we need, however, to keep in mind that the impasse reached and lack of progress made in the expansion of the permanent membership of the Council is a direct product of the tremendous importance of the issue and the diversity of views and interests — not the result of obstructionism or delaying tactics. We believe that the potential of the mechanism in place has not yet been exhausted and that the Open-ended Working Group should be given further opportunities.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): Seldom has the work of the Security Council engaged world public opinion as it has during the past year. The relevance of its decisions — and, let me add, of its non-decisions — was undisputed. Yet its role and its decision-making mechanisms were the subject of fervid discussions. It has become clear once again that, first, the Security Council plays a central role in the functioning of the multilateral system, and that, secondly, the legitimizing function of the Security Council is a decisive component of that central role.

Looking at the experience of the past year, we are more convinced than ever that reform of the Security Council is indispensable in order to maintain the credibility and legitimacy of the Council's decisions and to promote respect for its decisions in the interests of peace and security.

Yet the legitimacy of the Security Council is based on its representativeness. Member States must feel represented in the Security Council in order to be able to accept and implement its decisions, which are often very far-reaching.

When the number of seats on the Security Council was increased from 11 to 15 in 1963, the United Nations had 112 Members. When the present five permanent members were chosen in 1945, there were only 51. Out of those 51, 11 Members sat on the Council. That was more than 20 per cent of the total membership. The composition of the Security Council obviously no longer reflects the current political and economic realities of the international system. The distinction in 1945 between the victors and the vanquished has lost its validity. The bulk of the Member States today come from the large regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. The economic and political distribution of weight has changed.

With the end of the conflict between East and West, more than 13 years ago now, the road to adaptation was fundamentally cleared. With resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993, the Open-ended Working Group was established. It has performed remarkable work and, as I personally remember quite well, under Ambassador Razali Ismail of Malaysia's presidency of the fifty-first General Assembly session, brought us almost within reach of true reform. Today, its tenth report lies before us. We thank the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, the two Vice-Chairmen and all those who actively cooperated for their contributions.

Yet, if we are honest, we must admit to ourselves that the law of diminishing returns has long been showing its effect in the work of the Open-ended Working Group. We sometimes wonder if the continuation of the Group is still worthwhile.

The Secretary-General gave a strong new impetus to the reform of the entire United Nations system with his report on implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/58/323). In his statement to the General Assembly, he said that the United Nations — all of us — had come to a fork in the road. And, as part of the reform, he called for a Security Council that is "more broadly representative of the international community as a whole as well as the geopolitical realities of today" (*A/58/PV.7, p. 3*).

We thank him for that initiative. We thank those speakers who, in their contributions to the general debate of the fifty-eighth session, supported that call and identified Germany as a candidate for a permanent seat. Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schröder stated in this context that

> "the Council must be reformed and enlarged. First and foremost, it must also include more representatives of the developing countries. Let me reiterate that in the context of such a reform Germany is ready to assume greater responsibility". (*A/58/PV.9, p. 24*)

Let me emphasize that Germany does not want any quick fixes in this reform effort. We want enlargement not only in permanent but also in non-permanent seats. The large regions must receive additional permanent as well as additional non-permanent seats.

We want not only enlargement of the Security Council, but also the reform of its working methods. In recent years, significant advances have been made in this area, to which Germany, as a non-permanent member, has endeavoured to contribute.

And finally, we want not just Security Council reform, but a reform of the other United Nations organs as well.

The Secretary-General in his opening statement to the fifty-eighth session laid out a challenge to the Security Council and to its ability to respond collectively to new threats to peace and security. This is clearly an issue that needs to be addressed if the Council is to maintain its credibility and its relevance.

It is in that respect that we are in agreement with the task the Secretary-General has given to the high-level panel of eminent personalities. It is also in that spirit that we will contribute to the reform debate at the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to begin by thanking Mr. Jan Kavan for his commendable efforts in presiding over the discussions of the Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Security Council. We would also like to wish you, Mr. President, every success in carrying out this important and very difficult task, which we know you will be able to discharge.

Ever since the United Nations was established in 1945, those who are interested in strengthening the role of the United Nations, whether Member States or the Secretariat, have been striving to fulfil its purposes in all spheres of interest to the international community. Despite the fact that this international Organization has gone through very complicated and difficult situations, which have come hand in hand with the winds of change in the world, the United Nations has not changed to match the new developments. Therefore, it has now become most important to ensure that the United Nations can cope with those changes. Therefore, reform of the Organization is a question of critical importance and a priority responsibility for many who are interested in that matter.

Perhaps the most urgent reform is to modernize the Security Council, which bears responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. As in previous years, the General Assembly is discussing today the most important issue on its agenda, namely, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters. We strongly believe that the document circulated with respect to this agenda item reflects a commendable effort by the Open-ended Working Group that is considering this issue. That is reflected also in the outcome of the Working Group's most recent meetings, held during the previous session.

Although the Working Group did not succeed in reaching agreement on the key issues of reform, such as working methods and the numbers for an increase in the Council's membership, the value and importance of its efforts and achievements so far is not diminished.

The General Assembly's 1993 decision to establish the Group was a decisive step forward towards the reform of the Security Council to which States Members of the Organization aspire.

All countries and regional groups want to see the Council reformed and its working methods and procedures improved. Discussions in the Working

Group over the years have focused on those issues and have led to agreement on what is needed for reform and improvement of the Council's working methods in order to increase its effectiveness and improve its performance in dealing with the important issue of maintaining international peace and security. Today there is near consensus on many of the recommendations for changing the working methods of the Security Council. Overall reform of the Council is thus an urgent and priority issue. We must make a major effort to achieve it, particularly as the membership of the United Nations has increased substantially. Newer Members of the United Nations must be equitably represented. Beyond that, the items on the Council's agenda require reform if the Council is to be able to resolve existing difficult situations. Redoubled efforts are needed to that end.

We note an increase in the number of resolutions adopted by the Council, compared with the past. This is due to an increase in the number of items on the Council's agenda. Many of these issues did not exist in the past, such as dealing with post-conflict situations in such a way as to verify accomplishments and to help in the process of reconciliation and reconstruction.

We are satisfied with the Council's improved working methods. More open meetings are being held and Member States have more opportunities to speak on a variety of items. The end-of-month wrap-up meetings provide an opportunity to evaluate and support the Council's work. A better mechanism should be found to ensure participation by States, particularly those that are directly involved in the issues at hand. The success we have had in improving the Council's working methods should encourage us to make further progress more quickly. That requires political will on the part of all States, to ensure that the Council better represents public opinion and is more democratic and transparent in its approach to all international matters.

We must demonstrate a sincere desire for that, because the Security Council is the most representative organ in the area of international peace and security and because of its importance. We must do that without resorting to the use of double standards. Permanent members of the Council must meet their responsibilities, particularly their moral responsibility, and refrain from the use of veto power when this runs counter to rights that are widely recognized by the United Nations and when it can jeopardize international peace and security.

The entire world looks to the Security Council as the main body that helps prevent conflict. Some, however, harbour doubts about the Council's credibility, particularly with regard to certain issues. We should have no doubts about the activities of the Council and should not minimize its importance, since it is a haven for all. Everyone should feel safe and secure that the Council is protecting their rights and issues and providing justice and equality for all.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

United Nations A/58/PV.31

General Assembly

Fifty-eighth session

Official Records

31st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 14 October 2003, 3 p.m.
New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Andrianarivelo-Razafy (Madagascar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 56 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): The Charter of the United Nations has invested the Security Council with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. As the President of France emphasized at the opening meeting of the current General Assembly session, it is desirable for the Security Council's legitimacy that its composition better reflect the state of the world.

That is why France has always favoured an expansion of the Council, which would enhance its representativity. Such an expansion should apply to the permanent member category, because the presence of major countries is necessary. France particularly supports the aspirations of Germany and Japan. Also included among permanent members should be major countries of Asia and the Americas, such as India and Brazil, and, of course, of Africa. The Council's representativity should also be improved in the non-permanent member category, particularly to permit increased representation of developing countries.

The Assembly made those observations last year during the same debate. Today, the discussions are unfortunately at an impasse despite 10 years of debate. Therefore, we should give them new impetus, bearing in mind the general interest. We should also accompany any eventual reform of the Security Council's composition with a strengthening of its authority and effectiveness in the mission entrusted to it.

The Secretary-General has just made proposals to re-launch the needed reform of the Organization. France fully approves of his decision to convene a high-level panel of eminent personalities charged with recommending paths of action. But the Members of the United Nations must commit themselves to reform that extends beyond the Security Council. France, for its part, is prepared to play a full role in such discussions, which should be pursued without delay to enable the Security Council to continue its activities with effectiveness and determination.

Mr. Kulyk (Ukraine): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the GUUAM Member States — the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

At the outset, I should like to thank the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Jan Kavan of the Czech Republic, and the members of the Bureau of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council for their important efforts to intensify the overall process of Council

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reform during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. Let me also reaffirm our readiness to support constructive initiatives of the current presidency to contribute to that responsible task. The intention to elaborate recommendations for Council reform recently indicated by Assembly President Julian Hunte is a welcome step, and we hope it will bring tangible results.

The general debate, held in this Hall two weeks ago, highlighted the issue of Security Council reform as one of the priority tasks on the international agenda. In fact, there is a strong recognition of both the necessity and the urgency of making that body stronger and more effective in responding to challenges facing the world community in the field of peace and security.

Transforming the composition and the geographical representation of the Council is one of the most important prerequisites for further improving the Council's activities. Despite understandable frustration at the slow general progress in that area, we continue to rely on the common will to reach a reasonable compromise in order to achieve comprehensive reform of the Council in all its aspects. We hope that the high-level panel of eminent personalities that the Secretary-General intends to establish during the current General Assembly session will help us to view afresh the core of our prolonged deliberations and will pave the way to an appropriate solution.

With regard to the substance of Security Council reform, we hold the position that both categories of membership — permanent and non-permanent — should be expanded. However, equitable geographical distribution of non-permanent seats on the Security Council is a principle to which we attach special significance. Any comprehensive reform proposal must take into account the interests of every regional group. With respect to the idea of creating new permanent seats on the Council, we continue to maintain that countries which are able and willing to take greater responsibility — including financial — for maintaining international peace and security and which enjoy the necessary international authority and support at both the regional and global levels may receive permanent member status.

It is in all our interests that the Security Council be strong, proactive and powerful. Its effective performance in the international arena depends on our readiness to continue and enhance processes aimed at improving its working methods. From our point of view, a general look at the Council's current modus operandi makes it clear that, despite objective and subjective difficulties, that organ has made considerable progress towards greater effectiveness and transparency.

The GUUAM member States stand ready to contribute further to efforts aimed at strengthening and improving the activities of the Security Council.

Mr. Kim Sam-hoon (Republic of Korea): We can all agree that the current composition of the Security Council no longer reflects the underlying international geopolitical realities of the present day. There has been general agreement among Member States on the need to expand the Security Council in order to more adequately reflect those current realities in its composition. However, the question of how to expand the Council has plagued the United Nations for nearly a decade now. No conclusions have been reached on that issue, owing primarily to a divergence of views on how to characterize the structural changes that have taken place in the international geopolitical landscape since the Council's inception.

Some Member States may contend that the most significant shift over the past 50 years has been the emergence of a few global and regional Powers whose resources and influence can compete with — or in some cases even exceed — those of certain current permanent members of the Council. However, the Republic of Korea shares the view that an equally salient structural change has been the increase in the number of medium-sized Powers, which possess the willingness and the capabilities to make a substantive contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. Some of those countries could contribute resources — resources comparable to or greater than some of the "aspirants" — to the Security Council in the discharge of its responsibilities. The Republic of Korea believes that marginalizing and alienating those middle Powers by increasing the permanent membership could weaken the institutional vitality of our Organization. Nor would it be consistent with our collective vision of a more just and equitable world. Such an increase would be certain to create serious problems in the Council's operations. From an operational perspective, the increase in permanent members with divergent views could hinder the Council in the discharge of its responsibilities in a timely and efficient manner.

We all know from experience that there are inherent limitations on Security Council action in

situations that threaten international peace and security when a clash of strategic interests occurs among the permanent members. A Security Council with an expanded permanent membership with veto power would be even more likely to become paralysed by conflicting interests. If the Council became increasingly unable to act in grave and dire situations, while giving way to unilateral initiatives or actions led by coalitions of the willing, it would progressively fall into a condition of benign irrelevance in the world order. Such a development would run counter to our ultimate goal of reform, which is to enhance the relevance of the Security Council and strengthen United-Nations-centred multilateralism.

The Republic of Korea believes that under these circumstances the most practical and equitable solution to Security Council reform is an increase in the Council's non-permanent membership. We would like to see a geographical perspective factored into such an increase. Moreover, we believe that more opportunities to serve on the Council should be provided to those countries that are better capable of contributing to the activities of the United Nations. Such an increase in non-permanent Security Council members would benefit the largest number of Member States while causing the least amount of harm to the smallest number of Member States. We firmly believe that this formula for reform would serve both to make the Council more representative and democratic and to enhance the Council's operational efficiency.

The Republic of Korea supports the Secretary-General's idea of establishing a high-level panel of eminent personalities. The Organization will certainly benefit from the informed and intellectual outside input that the panel will offer. However, we note that when it comes to the longstanding issue of Security Council reform, it is not for want of wisdom or intellectual input that our current impasse persists.

In conclusion, the Republic of Korea would like to see every effort made to reform the Security Council in a way that not only ensures the equity, justice and effective operation of the Council, but guarantees its primary and central role in maintaining global peace and security.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate Mr. Jan Kavan, President of the General Assembly during its fifty-seventh session, for having so skilfully over the previous year guided the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. I would like also to commend the representatives of Iceland and Thailand for their efforts towards comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

Ten years have passed since the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group. Since 1993, we have all been looking forward to a positive outcome of the process, set in motion by General Assembly resolution 48/26, to reform the Security Council so that it equitably represents all regional groups in its permanent and non-permanent membership and ensures that democracy and transparency are firmly rooted in its decision-making process and in its working methods.

Taking stock of the results achieved over the past 10 years, it can be seen that all Member States have had an opportunity to express their views and put forward their own proposals for reform. In that context, resolution 53/30 represented a major step forward in deciding that a two thirds majority of the membership would be required for adopting any decision on reform. It has also become very clear that a consensus exists across the board with regard to restructuring the Council so as to bring it into line with geographical realities and the changes that have occurred since 1945, in particular the large number of States that have joined the United Nations and on whose behalf the Security Council works.

The report of the Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Council contained in document A/57/47 includes a series of relevant proposals aimed at improving the working methods of the Council. For its part, the Council has begun to incorporate some of those changes into its working methods, particularly with regard to troop-contributing countries for peacekeeping operations, the number of public meetings and the strengthening of contacts with regional organizations. I believe that those are steps in the right direction.

We believe that the Council is on the verge of implementing a series of positive decisions. Its relationship with the General Assembly, however, cannot be limited to the submission of just one report a year. The Council must submit a series of special reports, as Article 24 of the Charter stipulates, so as to allow for closer cooperation between the two organs in

dealing with issues involving international peace and security. The Council must also strengthen its ties with the International Court of Justice. And, on the subject of judicial issues, it is also of the utmost importance that the Council implement changes in its own rules of procedure to allow for public meetings to be held before the decision-making process begins. The current process is not yet sufficiently transparent. We know that the major decisions in the Council are made by one group — or even by a single country.

The increase in the number of Council members is an important aspect of its reform. Annex IV of the report of the Working Group contains a series of proposals put forward unilaterally by countries within the Group or by representatives of groups of countries.

Our position is that absolute equality in sovereignty among Member States is imperative in this process. We would prefer that any expansion be limited to the non-permanent-member category. We do not need any more permanent members to continue discriminating against other Member States. We, of course, will not obstruct any decision to add permanent seats as long as it is done in a non-selective manner and not based on criteria that give priority to countries that can carry the burden of the financing of peacekeeping operations or that are capable of providing a great number of peacekeeping troops or a great deal of equipment. Were we to adopt that principle only, we would simply be reinforcing the hegemony of the strong and the wealthy in the Council, always to the detriment of the poor and weaker States, which constitute the majority. Any expansion of the permanent category must therefore reflect equitable geographical distribution and in particular the status of developing countries. Latin America is not represented, and Africa does not have a permanent seat either, though it represents almost one third of the membership. This must be remedied.

We must also work to realize the aspirations of our continent as represented by the African Union, as embodied in the Harare Declaration and as set out by President Chissano in his statement on the issue. Africa must therefore have two permanent seats on the Security Council, to be occupied by rotation among agreed criteria by African States.

Negotiations in the Working Group have shown that some seek to stress the retention of privileges as they are held today by permanent members, in particular in terms of the right to veto. There can be no question that this is one of the most crucial issues and that it needs to be resolved. The veto right flies in the face of the principle of equal sovereignty among States as stipulated in the Charter and contravenes the principles of justice and democracy.

Many countries, including my own, have spoken out to say that the right to veto does not serve the interests of international peace and security but, rather, the national interests of just a few countries, in particular those that constantly flout the Security Council's authority and refuse to implement its decisions, defying the entire world.

The fact is that the countries that were the victors of the Second World War have arrogated to themselves those privileges. More than five decades have gone by since then, and the world has experienced profound transformations. The membership of the United Nations now stands at 191. Two thirds of these countries were not Members 50-odd years ago and never had any of the privileges of the five permanent members.

We therefore must stress a position we have steadfastly maintained for some 30 years now — that we must do away with the veto right. This could first be achieved by using a restrictive approach and setting out a series of conditions, including the need for at least two votes against by permanent members when a decision is reached by the majority.

Another proposal will involve the use of the veto right in ratifying a decision by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly. These and other such decisions could lead us to doing away with the veto right outright. We believe that Security Council reform must do away with the privileges now given to just a few countries, which allow them to hold hegemonistic sway over the entire world.

The Secretary-General has spoken out on these issues, saying that if we want Security Council decisions to be respected the world over especially by the developing countries, we must tackle the issue of reforming the Council with greater professionalism. We would add that one of the main documents — the Millennium Declaration — calls for intensified efforts to be made to bring about Council reform in all respects. We must now try to give concrete form to the call made by the Secretary-General and act on the commitments we entered into three years ago.

We believe that in future meetings of the Working Group there must be sufficient political will on all sides to bring these reform efforts to a successful conclusion, so that, as a result, the Council can fulfil the purposes and principles of the Charter, work in the service of all nations and be more transparent and more democratic in its decision-making process.

Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the outset, I should like to express my thanks and appreciation to the President for his sincere efforts to direct the deliberations of this session, which is dedicated to one of the most important items on the agenda of the General Assembly.

My delegation has read carefully the most recent report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and other Matters Related to the Security Council. We note that, 10 years after its creation, and despite the consensus reached by all Member States and the multiplicity of suggestions offered by States on this matter, the Group has not been able to reach agreement on how to effect the required changes relating to the composition and methods of work of the Council, especially as concerns the increase in the number of its members and the use of the veto. We hope that the influential countries in particular will have the political will to reach a consensus on this issue in the near future.

We have expressed our position on this item regarding the importance of restructuring the Security Council and the methods of its reform. Today we reiterate our position, which can be summarized as follows.

First, the principle of increasing the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Council on the basis of a ratio that strengthens its efficiency and its decision-making capacity must be supported. Such an increase should conform to the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States, as well as to the principle of equitable geographical distribution and the universal nature of the Council. It should also take into consideration the imbalance that exists in its geographical representation, ensuring the developing countries a greater chance of representation.

We also call for giving priority to the allocation of permanent seats to those States that have demonstrated their commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security — States which will be elected by other Member States in the General Assembly. We believe also that a permanent seat should be allocated to the Arab Group to be occupied by rotating members agreed upon by the whole Group. We call also for the adoption of constructive suggestions on parameters and controls relating to the right to veto, as a step towards reaching agreed language that will ensure that the Council fulfils its responsibilities with greater objectivity and impartiality and avoids abusing that right.

The United Arab Emirates is deeply concerned at the continued failure of the Council to carry out its mandate and responsibilities with respect to the tensions in the Middle East, especially in relation to the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people. Israel, the occupying State, continues to violate international law and to show contempt for all relevant resolutions of the United Nations concerning the conflict in the area.

The latest of those offences was its violation of Syrian sovereignty on 5 October, in an act of aggression that was deplored by the international community, which considered it a flagrant violation of international legality and of the Charter of the United Nations. Nevertheless, the Security Council took no action against Israel — because of the position taken by certain influential permanent Council members — which implies tacit encouragement to Israel. We hope that Israel will not interpret this as encouragement to encroach on the sovereignty of other States with impunity and that the situation will be redressed so that we can avoid sending a message to other States that such aggression and violations are permitted.

Finally, we hope that our deliberations today will lead to some concrete progress in the work towards the reform of the Security Council and an equitable increase in its membership to strengthen its effectiveness and credibility, as well as its central role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Balestra (San Marino): After 10 years of intensive work in the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council, we are here today to discuss not how to reform the Security Council, but how to proceed in our discussion. This could seem ironic but it is just proof of the importance and sensitivity of this issue.

On the one hand, the frustration of those who would like to see some quick concrete results is understandable. On the other, the concern about a

decision taken under pressure and with an inflexible time frame is also understandable. After all, we are in the process of substantially modifying the most important organ of the international community that deals with peace and security — and this is not an easy task.

In my opinion and in the opinion of San Marino, the simultaneous increase in both categories, permanent and non-permanent members, seems still far from the general agreement required for the adoption of such an important decision. An increase in the number of non-permanent members is instead the only element that seems shared by all Member States, but that, unfortunately, remains hostage to the expansion in both categories.

The position of my country on the enlargement is well known. San Marino is in favour of an increase only in the number of non-permanent members. In fact, we are opposed to any reform that may raise inequalities among States. San Marino also considers that a quick fix would represent an approximate solution. It would crystallize an Organization that should, on the contrary, reflect the political, social and economic changes in the world. In addition, an increase in the non-permanent members would be the only possible outcome for the time being.

In the opinion of my country, any enlargement should equitably address all Member States, correcting the current imbalances. The regional groups should continue to play a basic role in the allocation of Security Council seats to their members.

My delegation wishes to welcome the intention of the Secretary-General to establish a high-level panel of eminent personalities with the task, among others, of recommending ways to strengthen the United Nations through the reform of its institutions and processes. This initiative could bring new momentum to our discussion. Nevertheless, it is fundamental for the panel to be composed of eminent experts with a specific knowledge of international organizations and to act within a well-defined mandate. Moreover, San Marino considers it necessary that such experts, in fulfilling their mandate, should take into consideration all consultations carried out in the Working Group and maintain intense interaction with all Member States.

Mr. Gopinathan (India): The Indian delegation welcomes this opportunity to comment on agenda item 56: Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

Many delegations expressed during the general debate, held at the beginning of the fifty-eighth session, a sense of deep regret over the inability of the Security Council to reach satisfactory agreement on the issue of war and peace involving Iraq in the first quarter of this year. Many attributed the inability of the Security Council to arrive at a collective and unified decision on the major issues placed before it to the lack of balanced representation in its current composition.

The Prime Minister of India did touch upon this imbalance when he stated in his address at this session of the Assembly, on 24 September:

> "For the Security Council to represent genuine multilateralism in its decisions and actions, its membership must reflect current world realities. Most United Nations Members today recognize the need for an enlarged and restructured Security Council, with more developing countries as permanent and non-permanent members. The permanent members guard their exclusivity. Some States with weak claims want to ensure that others do not enter the Council as permanent members. This combination of complacency and negativism has to be countered with a strong political will. The recent crises warn us that until the Security Council is reformed and restructured, its decisions cannot reflect truly the collective will of the community of nations." (*A/58/PV.11, p. 14*)

Within the United Nations, there has been ample recognition of the need for the Organization and its architecture to deal with the maintenance of international peace and security to adapt to the needs and realities of the times. The Secretary-General himself underscored this point on more than one occasion. In the report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, presented at the current session of the General Assembly, he said:

> "Increasingly, however, [the] decisions [of the Security Council] lack legitimacy in the eyes of the developing world, which feels that its views and interests are insufficiently represented among the decision-takers. The composition of the Security Council — unchanged in its essentials since 1945 — seems at odds with the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century." (*A/58/323, para. 96*)

Introducing his report on the work of the Organization at the beginning of the general debate, the Secretary-General had said that to regain the confidence

of States, and of world opinion, the Security Council must become "more broadly representative of the international community as a whole as well as the geopolitical realities of the contemporary world" (*A/58/PV.7, p. 3*).

India's position on the reform and restructuring of the Security Council has been summed up in the words of Prime Minister Vajpayee quoted at the beginning of my statement. Therefore, I shall not go into details, as they have been spelt out on several occasions in the past. Suffice it to say that we do not subscribe to partial and piecemeal solutions that bring no resolution to the core problem. Nor are we intimidated by relevance of the time factor cited by some as a reason to rush into partial reform. A subject as complex and intricate as Council reform cannot have a time line or a quick fix imposed, even as we agree that Council reform is urgent and pressing, and must be administered in a reasonable time frame.

I would be remiss if I did not register my delegation's sincere appreciation for the lead taken by your predecessor, the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, Mr. Jan Kavan, of the Czech Republic, in the work programme of the Open-ended Working Group for this year. Acting on a proposal made by some to streamline cluttered and unstructured documents, noteworthy progress was achieved in pruning down the document on cluster II issues.

The questionnaire circulated by the President to Member States in the month of May was a dynamic initiative in that it posed and brought to the fore some very pertinent issues, apart from defining where the mainstream lies. It demonstrated that the majority continues to favour a comprehensive approach to Security Council reform, that there must be simultaneous reform in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, and that cluster I and cluster II issues must be dealt with in tandem.

Broad agreement was also expressed on the issue that the time is now perhaps ripe to begin considering concrete proposals for reform on cluster I issues. Member States have also expressed a willingness to consider a change in the working methods of the Working Group in order to inject some dynamism and achieve a breakthrough or register some progress in the proceedings. We need to be cognizant of those facts as we move forward.

Finally, I should like to say a word on the initiative of the Secretary-General to set up a high-level panel of eminent personalities to study the question of United Nations reform in a broad and comprehensive way, of which Council reform will no doubt comprise an important part. We welcome the initiative and look forward to the Group's report and the Secretary-General's recommendations thereon, expected sometime before the beginning of the fifty-ninth session. We hope that the initiative will impart a fresh outlook and inject new momentum into a process that must now urgently move forward. We shall continue discussions in that spirit in the Open-ended Working Group next year. India is wholly committed to working with other delegations in order to carry this process forward to achieve meaningful and productive outcomes.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council is not shouldering the "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security" that United Nations Members confer on it, and the Council is no longer "carrying out its duties under this responsibility" or acting on the behalf of Members. Frequently, the Security Council is not acting in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. The illegal war in Iraq and the inaction in the Middle East conflict, inter alia, are eloquent and irrefutable examples. The Security Council is also doing violence to the spirit and the provisions of the Charter through an increasingly voracious and intrusive agenda that is usurping the functions of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council.

The Security Council has become an anti-democratic and conspiratorial body that acts on the basis of the opacity and secrecy of informal consultations, which have become the norm, not the exception. The Council is seriously inequitable. In no other organ is the principle of sovereign equality being violated in such a daily, institutional and flagrant way. The non-permanent members are excluded and ignored, despite the fact that they enjoy legitimacy granted by the ballot box, not by wars.

There will not be true United Nations reform without Security Council reform. The rule of international law — particularly of the Charter — will not be restored, nor will there be democracy in the Organization, so long as the Council wields totalitarian powers.

It is true that members of the Council, including permanent members, are also suffering from the dictatorship of the super-Power, established by the

force of arms and money. What can be done if the veto is the principle and the purpose of that order? The veto was a reflection of an international balance that does not even exist now. Today, it expresses only the impotence of disagreement. It has grave consequences and poses high risks for the Powers that hold it under the Charter and that are declared irrelevant when they actually exercise it. Paradoxically, the super-Power uses it most and needs it least. Member States, with a handful of exceptions, agree that the veto must be eliminated.

How can we address the veto to eliminate, modify or regulate it? Let us be realistic: what is essential is not the veto's legal aspect, but the powerful forces that suppress the other permanent members, the non-permanent members and the membership at large. They are the forces that regulate the essential processes of the economy, finances and military supremacy along with precarious and fleeting balances of power. They are the same correlations that are preventing the exercise of the mechanical majority of non-permanent members and preventing the General Assembly — as a result of this era's political, military and financial realities — from regaining the powerful functions outlined in the document we call, with nostalgia and hope, the Charter. Today, the United Nations is a reflection of the world dictatorship from which we are suffering and of the unjust, exclusive and unsustainable order in which we live.

In the meantime, let us continue to work. The Security Council must be expanded to include new permanent and non-permanent members. As stated by the Non-Aligned Movement, if there is no agreement on other categories, the number of non-permanent members must be immediately increased. The new permanent and non-permanent Council seats created as part of an expansion must have exactly the same prerogatives as the current ones. The objective of an expansion must be to correct the inadequate representation of developing countries. Two or three African countries, two or three countries from Latin America and the Caribbean, and two or three of the developing countries in Asia must come in as permanent members with the same prerogatives as the current ones, including the veto. Until we achieve the ultimate objective of eliminating the veto, we will need to limit its application to Chapter VII of the Charter as a first step towards that objective.

Informal Council consultations must proceed from a decision adopted in a formal meeting on the basis of a proposal by one or several Council members that is included in the record. To save time, we will not reiterate many other elements that our delegation has already addressed in this Hall so many times. The General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group must continue its work with renewed vigour.

Can we only hope for a better world? We, the powerful majority of Member States, can impose democracy. This can done only from within the General Assembly, where each State has a vote and none a veto. This is no utopian vision. It would be feasible to create a powerful alliance among all Member States that would include almost all of the permanent members of the Council that aspire to democracy in international relations, sovereign equality, multilateral agreement, international law and a system of collective security — in other words, those that want a United Nations that is perfectible but indispensable, notwithstanding its flaws, mistakes and capitulations. In the absence of a comprehensive political decision, only superficial, cosmetic reforms will be feasible.

Ms. Ndhlovu (South Africa): The Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform was established because the States Members of the United Nations recognized the need to address representational equity in the Security Council and to examine formulas to increase its membership. The Working Group was also charged with examining other important matters related to the composition and the working methods of the Council, with the intention of arriving at a package of reforms that would ensure that the Council would effectively execute its mandate of maintaining international peace and security. After a decade of debating Council reform, we find that we are still far from reaching general consensus and that the Security Council is, now more than ever before, in dire need of reform.

Barely a fortnight ago heads of State or Government and senior representatives congregated here for the general debate of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. They recognized the complex challenges that the United Nations faces in the new millennium and the importance of revitalizing our Organization in order to meet these complex global challenges. The call for United Nations reform by 141 world leaders underscores the importance and urgency that Member States attach to this important issue.

The Secretary-General's initiative to appoint a panel of eminent persons received strong support,

because it is now generally accepted that the United Nations cannot continue simply to talk about reform — it must urgently act to make itself relevant to the times and the challenges of our era.

One positive aspect of the Secretary-General's proposal is that the issue of Security Council reform would be dealt with in the context of United Nations-wide integrated reform, including the important element of strengthening the relationships between the organs and institutions of the United Nations.

In the view of the general public, the tardy response to the crisis in Liberia and the failure of diplomacy as regards Iraq and the Middle East was in part attributed to the Security Council and, by extension, to the entire United Nations system. Whatever our views may be of such criticism, we now find ourselves in a situation in which effecting change in the composition and working methods of the Security Council has become an urgent moral and political imperative. Effective and timeous United Nations action in many troubled spots around the globe is essential, because lives depend on it. There can be no greater motivation for us to now bridge our differences and revitalize our common purpose against the scourge of war.

South Africa supports expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of Council membership, with new members having equal sovereign status with existing members in those categories. As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the African Union, South Africa has actively participated in the Group. South Africa supports the call by the large majority of Member States for the reform process to be transparent and give due consideration to equitable geographic representation in the context of a package of reforms that would not disadvantage developing countries.

Arguments have been put forward that the size of the Council can be increased only slightly from the current 15, because the Council should not become cumbersome and unable to respond rapidly to crises. Our experience with the Security Council has shown us that its credibility in dealing with crises was not an issue of size, but that credibility emerged when there was a sense of transparency, legitimacy, representativity and accountability in the its deliberations and actions. Similarly, we found that the size of the Council was not the basis for its slow reactions or even its failure to act. More often, it was the use or the threat of use of the veto, as well as a lack of political will on the part of individual powerful States, that often frustrated the will of the majority of Council Members and, indeed, of the majority of United Nations Members.

In this regard, the question of the veto remains a contentious one in the debate on Council reform. When we examine the record of the use of the veto, it becomes clear that we cannot continue to have situations in which individual Member States serve their own narrow national interests while ignoring the overwhelming voice of the international community.

It is, consequently, important that we overcome our traditional divisions on how to reform the Security Council and seek agreement on the composition and the working methods of a Security Council that will serve us all in the context of the new geopolitical realities of this new millennium. The time has come to arrest the erosion of the Council's credibility and to work with the Secretary-General in his bold initiative to reform the United Nations in the interests of all Member States.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to express our gratitude to the former Chairman of the Working Group, Mr. Jan Kavan, for his determination and commitment throughout the past year's meetings of the Group. His personal efforts, including the informal survey that was conducted, highlighted the near-universal dissatisfaction with the progress of discussions in the Group.

My delegation welcomes Mr. Julian Hunte as the new Chairman of the Working Group and would like to assure him of our support and cooperation throughout upcoming meetings. We believe that he will guide the Working Group through a challenging period during which it will have to take stock of the progress it has made and decide on the best way to consolidate its work into concrete proposals on a reform package. We look forward to working with him and to contributing to meeting that challenge.

Mr. Kim Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Ten years have passed since the General Assembly began deliberations on the issue of Security Council reform, in conformity with the consistent demand of the Member States of the United Nations. However, agreement has not yet been reached. It is no exaggeration to say that repeated deliberations have produced no results at all. That is largely due to the pursuit of unilateral interests, which constitutes a

violation of the basic purpose of the reform. My delegation believes that priority should be attached to the following matters, if the Security Council is to be democratized thoroughly so as to resolve international peace and security issues in line with the common interests and demands of all Member States.

First, the Security Council should be reformed to ensure the full representation of developing countries. As we are all aware, the present composition of the Security Council does not fully represent the demands of today's reality. Only when the representation of developing countries, which make up the overwhelming majority of Member States, is realized will it be possible to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of the work of the Security Council and to speed up the democratization of the United Nations.

In that respect, we consider it important to increase the number of non-permanent members first, so that developing countries are fully represented. In addition, under the circumstances in which even elementary issues are not agreed upon with regard to Security Council reform, it is necessary to take a serious approach vis-à-vis expansion in the category of permanent membership.

Secondly, the Security Council should adhere to the principles of justice and impartiality in its activities, on the basis of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Due to the unilateralism and high-handedness of the super-Power, the Security Council was unable to properly carry out the missions entrusted to it by the Charter with regard to resolving major international issues. That has undermined the authority and dignity of the Security Council as an organ authorized to ensure peace and security. If the Security Council is incapable of observing the principles of justice and fairness, which are its lifeblood, the value of its existence should be publicly questioned.

The Security Council should fundamentally improve its working methods and fully represent the will and interests of all Member States, thereby restoring the credibility of the international community.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, at the outset, to thank Ambassador John Negroponte, President of the Security Council for this month, for his introduction of the report of the Security Council (A/58/2), submitted to the General Assembly in accordance with relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

My delegation, which did not participate in yesterday's debate on that item, would have preferred to discuss the items pertaining to the Council's report and to representation in the Council together, given the increasingly obvious link between the two items. In that regard, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to make a few brief comments on the report of the Security Council.

The consideration of the Council's report provides a valuable opportunity to examine in depth the work done by the Council as well as to identify the measures that must be taken to make the necessary improvements in the working methods of that important body.

With regard to the report's format, my delegation welcomes the fact that this is a short, analytical document containing a statistical section.

With regard to the functioning of the Council, we are pleased to note that during the period under review the Council held more open meetings, during which an increasing number of States participated. We also note a clear increase in the number of open briefings organized by the Secretariat, which make it possible for States that are not members of the Council to be better informed about certain matters being addressed by the Council.

With regard to the wrap-up sessions held at the end of each month, which are open to non-members of the Council, my delegation believes that that practice is an opportunity to speak on subjects of concern to the international community in an analytical, frank and open manner. We believe that practice should be continued and encouraged.

Having said that, much remains to be done to make the work of the Council even more transparent to all Member States.

Turning to the issue of substance, the report of the Security Council reveals the fact that the Council has not merely reacted to threats to international and regional peace and security; it has also acted directly, resolutely and forcefully to address a great number of conflicts in Africa. However, the Council's efforts have fallen short of our expectation vis-à-vis the Middle East. The Council's inability to become more involved in resolving the Palestinian issue poses a serious threat to the region and to the authority of the Security Council.

Lastly, my delegation supports the President's idea of submitting specific recommendations and

constructive proposals after our debate on this issue in order to improve the capacity of the Security Council.

With regard to agenda item 56, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", allow me first to pay tribute to Mr. Jan Kavan, former president of the General Assembly, and his two Vice-Presidents in the Working Group on Security Council Reform, for their outstanding contribution to the item under discussion today.

The crucial importance of reforming the Security Council has constantly been reiterated from year to year since the establishment, in 1993, of the Working Group entrusted with the consideration of this issue in all aspects. We certainly appreciate the delicate nature and complexity of that task. Nevertheless, we believe that we need to carry out comprehensive reform of the Security Council as soon as possible, and that we must intensify our efforts to that end.

The world is facing new challenges that necessitate our working together within the United Nations, which remains the ideal framework within which to join our efforts to establish international peace and security, as well as the source of international law to which all States without exception should commit themselves.

As Secretary-General Kofi Annan pointed out in his statement to the General Assembly at the opening of the general debate, those challenges make it necessary for the Security Council

> "to regain the confidence of States and of world public opinion — both by demonstrating its ability to deal effectively with the most difficult issues and by becoming more broadly representative of the international community as a whole as well as the geopolitical realities of today." (*A/58/PV.7, p. 3*)

While we support the Secretary-General's appeal for a profound reform of our Organization, we reaffirm the fact that Tunisia is willing to take an active part in international efforts to attain that goal, for which there is an increasingly urgent need. The Security Council should be involved in that profound reform. Nevertheless, its enlargement should not necessarily wait until that process is completed.

The wealth of varied proposals that have been submitted give us the potential elements to act towards that end. However, since 1993, after almost 10 years of intense and substantive deliberations, the Open-ended Working Group on that question has not yet managed to develop a specific and universally acceptable formula. The report before us reflects the frustrating deadlock that we have witnessed since the Group was established. The report is still a simple compilation of opposing ideas and proposals that we have been endlessly considering for 10 years now.

This does not mean at all that we do not recognize the progress made in certain aspects of reform of the Council, particularly with respect to its working methods. In fact, the long deliberations of the Group have enabled us to identify a certain number of key elements that have been widely supported by the majority of Member States.

Those elements include, first, the need to reform both the composition and the functioning of the Council to ensure greater representativeness. Secondly, the need to consider the issue of the veto in conjunction with that of the increase in the number of Security Council members. Thirdly, the need to further improve the working methods and decision-making process of the Council to promote the openness, transparency and democratic nature of that organ. Fourthly, the need to consider all aspects of reform of the Council in the framework of a comprehensive package. Lastly, the need for periodic review of this reformed Council.

It is therefore clear that we have the basis for a solution. It is also clear that what is lacking is neither ideas nor proposals but rather the necessary political will to achieve the common goal, set forth in General Assembly resolution 48/26 of 1993 and reaffirmed in the Millennium Declaration, as well as a specific commitment to that end.

Tunisia, which has taken part in all the deliberations of the Working Group since its establishment, continues to stand by its position on that issue, which it has reaffirmed several times. Indeed, my country believes that the goal of that reform is the strengthening of democratic and fair representation on the Council, as well as its credibility and effectiveness. The Security Council must reflect the political and economic realities of our world today. It must have the necessary democratic legitimacy to act on behalf of the international community in carrying out the mandate entrusted to it in accordance with the Charter. Those goals cannot be attained without an increase in both categories of members, permanent and non-permanent.

The size of a restructured Security Council should reflect genuine representation of developing countries and also representation among the industrialized countries that meet the criteria set forth in the Charter.

In that context, Tunisia has always vigorously supported the position of Africa and its demand to be granted two permanent seats, with the privileges inherent to that membership category, and two additional non-permanent seats. Tunisia also supports the rotation scheme approved by the African heads of State and Government. I would also like to recall in that context that my country supports the candidacy of Germany and Japan for permanent seats in the Security Council in light of our belief that those two countries are capable of making a major contribution to the work of the Council and of assuming the responsibilities that fall to permanent members.

With regard to the right of veto, my delegation adheres to the position of the Non-Aligned Movement calling for limitations on the application of the veto to actions undertaken in the framework of Chapter VII of the Charter. Clearly, a positive and constructive attitude on the part of the Security Council permanent members concerning that question will be crucial.

Finally, the issue of periodic review of this reformed Security Council is an essential element of the reform programme that deserves serious consideration. That review should be viewed as a confidence-building measure that will enable us to make the necessary adjustments for the future. Still more important, it will represent the mechanism through which we will be able to assess the contribution made by the new members to the strengthening of the effectiveness of the Council.

We are concerned by the deadlock that seems to be getting worse over time and is prevailing in the Working Group's deliberations. In fact, without genuine political will and a spirit of compromise, the entire reform process will be inconclusive. It is time to adjust international institutions to the reality of the modern world.

We must now strive to establish fresh momentum in our work and begin genuine negotiations on the specific aspects of a viable, fair and especially realistic compromise. My delegation will continue to vigorously support any proposal that will make tangible the ideas of representativeness, transparency and democratization of the Security Council.

We rely, Mr. President, on your energy and wisdom to guide our future work on this issue towards the success that we all seek.

Mr. Schori (Sweden): Last year we had a combined debate on the report of the Security Council and its possible enlargement. In the spirit of our common efforts to revitalize the work of this Assembly I will address both items in one statement, commencing with the membership of the Security Council.

The debate this year, on a practically eternal issue, is much invigorated by the Secretary-General's recent and clear call for radical reform of the United Nations. The world has changed tremendously since the foundation of the United Nations in 1945. We all agree that the United Nations must adapt to changing realities if we want to safeguard its primary role in international peace and security. Mr. Annan put a challenge before us. Sweden welcomes this challenge, and agrees with him that we cannot afford to delay dealing with the core issues.

Global threats must be defined and addressed collectively. Global security requires multilateral solutions. Only the Security Council can provide legitimacy to the use of force beyond the right of self-defence. But this legitimacy is closely linked to how the Security Council is perceived by the entire United Nations membership and the international community as a whole. The Council must therefore be representative of the 191 Member States. Its composition must reflect the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century.

A reform of the Security Council is thus essential for the Council to stay relevant in the eyes of the world. The deadlock on the composition can be broken. We should not let the best become the enemy of the good. Rather than trying to find the optimal solution for decades to come, we should instead accept that any reform may have to be re-thought, in five or ten years' time. A swift agreement on an expansion of the Security Council would demonstrate to the world that this Organization is indeed prepared to adapt and adjust, in order to safeguard and strengthen its legitimacy and efficiency in global politics.

Sweden therefore suggests that the Security Council be enlarged with a number of non-permanent members, especially from developing countries. Sweden believes that an agreement on such an expansion could be reached fairly quickly, if we all adopt a flexible attitude concerning our respective, national positions. Adding non-permanent members now does not exclude the

possibility of agreeing on additional permanent members at a later date.

In his report on the work of the Security Council, the Secretary-General raises the issue of an increased workload for the Council. It is therefore encouraging to note that, in spite of this, the Council has become more transparent towards the entire membership. Sweden welcomes the increase of open meetings in the Council and we hope this practice continues.

Let me also take this opportunity to welcome the format of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. It is encouraging that, for the second year, the members of the Security Council are using the new and more user-friendly format, with the analytical summary and a substantially decreased number of pages. It is a good example of how to modernize United Nations reporting.

We have momentum for reform, a window of opportunity. The Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration (A/58/323), his speech made at the opening of the current Assembly session and the tremendous support that was demonstrated during the general debate should encourage us all to make change happen. Sweden stands ready to fulfil its responsibilities, and it is determined to be an active partner at this fork in the road; but ultimately it is a matter of our collective effort.

Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): We can not avoid a certain feeling of weariness when, once again, we have to note with regret that the work of the Open-ended Working Group charged with considering all aspects of the reform of the Security Council has hardly made any progress since the fifty-seventh session of the Assembly. And yet, we must be quite clear that we should not resign ourselves to the idea that the reform of the Security Council is no longer necessary, just because the work is now deadlocked. Quite the contrary: each year that passes reinforces our feeling that the Council's current composition no longer reflects today's geopolitical realities. We cannot continue to ignore this fact forever. Ultimately, it is the credibility and the legitimacy of the Council that are at stake. If we do nothing, our inability itself will contribute to eroding the credibility of the Council and of the United Nations in general. I do not think that this is a situation that anyone would want to see come about, since the implications for the maintenance of international peace and security would be quite dramatic.

Therefore, we all need to ask the following question: are our national interests in the long-term better served by the refusal of some to make certain concessions? Of course, we all have national positions to defend, and that is quite legitimate. But perhaps it is time to recognize that it would be in our collective interest to resolutely commit to a constructive search for a compromise.

Therefore my delegation totally supports what the Secretary-General said here in his statement to the General Assembly on 23 September with regard to the need to break the deadlock on this question and with regard to our responsibility for doing so. We congratulate him for having taken the initiative to re-launch, at the highest level of the Organization, the process of reform. We therefore look forward with great interest to the proposals that will be made by the panel of eminent persons. As to the broader context of the reform of the Council, the panel needs to shed new light on our debate, and therefore we hope that this development will give new impetus to implementing the reform and that it will lend new dynamism at the political level.

In fact, it is not so much new ideas that we need; the main elements that are needed for a solution are already on the negotiating table. What is lacking is the political will to take the lead, to take the necessary steps to bring the positions closer together.

The only thing Belgium wants here is to bring about a balanced, realistic reform that would correspond to the wishes of the vast majority of Member States, a reform that would strengthen the representativeness — and therefore the legitimacy — of the Security Council, without jeopardizing its efficiency. With a group of countries that share this approach, my delegation has introduced some pragmatic proposals that seek to expand both categories of membership, permanent and non-permanent, as well as to limit the use of the veto. We remain convinced that these are the parameters that are necessary to arrive at a solution of compromise. I can assure you that my delegation will continue to actively participate in the work of the Working Group in the same constructive spirit that inspired our proposals. You can count on our full support in this endeavour.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Please allow me to express my thanks to Mr. Kavan, Chairman of the Open-Ended Working Group of the last General Assembly session, and the two Vice-

Chairmen, Ambassador Ingolfsson and Ambassador Kasemsarn for their hard work to ensure the smooth progress of the Open-ended Working Group. We believe that under the leadership of Mr. Hunte, the new Chairman, the Open-ended Working Group will continue to hold constructive discussions.

The past year has been an extraordinary one for the Security Council. On the one hand, positive progress has been made in the efforts to help seek solutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, thus contributing to the maintenance of peace and stability of the countries and regions concerned. This has been widely acclaimed by the international community, especially the African countries. On the other hand, the Security Council has been confronted with unprecedented challenges on the Iraqi issue. Some people have thus felt frustrated about the failure of the Security Council to reach consensus on that issue. Some are worried about whether the Security Council is able to fulfil the responsibility of maintaining peace and security. However, the general debate of the current session shows that the basic consensus of the vast number of Member States remains unchanged. That is, faced with this new situation, the role of the Security Council in maintaining world peace and security should be further enhanced, not weakened. The authority of the Security Council should be reinforced and not reduced.

As was pointed out by Secretary-General Kofi Annan during the General Assembly general debate, it is necessary to reform United Nations organs, including the Security Council, so that they can better respond to the new issues created by the new situation. China shares the view of the Secretary-General. We have consistently supported the efforts to keep pace with the times and conduct appropriate and necessary reform of the Security Council. Reform should be aimed at enhancing the capacity of the Security Council to face new challenges and threats and at realizing more equitable representation.

Security Council reform should start with its unbalanced composition. Currently, representation of the developing countries is insufficient in the Council. Priority should therefore be given to increasing representation of the developing countries according to the principle of equitable geographic distribution.

Discussions on increasing the membership of the Security Council have been going on for ten years at the Open-ended Working Group. In the current circumstances, we should have not only the patience for extensive and in-depth discussions and the urgency to speed up reforms, but also the wisdom to make the appropriate compromises. The Chinese delegation is ready to continue to take an active part in the Open-ended Working Group discussions in a constructive manner. We look forward to creative discussions among all parties during the current General Assembly session in this regard.

We also support the Security Council in the further improvement of its working methods to increase transparency of its work and its efficiency. In recent years, marked progress has been made in improving working methods by holding more open meetings and through good communication and cooperation with troop-contributing countries. This has been well received by many Member States. China is prepared to continue to work with the other members of the Security Council in that regard.

China welcomes the proposal put forward by the Secretary-General on setting up a high-level panel of eminent persons. We believe that the composition of the panel should reflect geographical balance. We also hope to see the panel yield positive proposals that will reflect a consensus to provide the majority of Member States the basis for further discussion and decision.

Mr. Alcalay (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Yesterday the delegation of Venezuela addressed the Assembly to acknowledge the Security Council's efforts to improve the preparation of its report to the General Assembly, as many previous speakers have highlighted at this very meeting.

Today we intend to focus in the second part of our statement on the issue of equitable representation on the Security Council and of increasing its membership. Unfortunately, we cannot arrive at the same optimistic conclusions on these issues as on others. We note that the efforts made in the Security Council Working Group on equitable representation and on increasing its membership have not produced the results the international community, represented in the Assembly, has been seeking for more than 10 years.

The issue that brings us together today is vitally important to our Organization at a crucially important time to mankind. The Security Council, a principal organ of this system, must regain and consolidate its authority, capabilities and efficiency. Despite the fact

that another year has gone by without progress being made by the Working Group in attaining the proposed objectives, and despite the many efforts made and resources invested, every passing year reveals to us the increasingly pressing need to achieve the consensus necessary among Member States to make the Security Council an equitable and democratic body adapted to this new era.

We believe that Security Council reform must be comprehensive so that the issues of its expansion, the use of the veto and the working methods it should have to be able to adapt itself to current circumstances can be dealt with jointly.

We note with satisfaction the changes in the Council's working methods. This has been observed on many occasions. There has been undeniable progress in terms of holding more meetings and public debates, the holding of briefings that are very useful to non-member States, the more equitable treatment being accorded to non-member States on the speakers' list for public debates and the greater availability of public information on the development and results of the work of the Council. There can be no doubt that that reflects progress.

However, the enthusiasm we feel over these changes gives way to something else when we consider the issues of the veto and of the increase in the Council's membership, progress on both of which remains deadlocked. We note with frustration that the same readiness shown to advance in the areas I mentioned earlier is not evident in the same way with respect to these two other aspects, which are essential.

For a long time, Venezuela has supported elimination of the veto, given its anti-democratic and anachronistic nature. Authentic democratization of the Security Council requires elimination of that privilege or, at the very least, its regulation, in order to restrict its use to what is absolutely necessary. Our hope is that there will be just representation, particularly of developing countries, on the expanded Council. We have taken one more step towards that end by lending our support, in Venezuela, my country, to Brazil's aspirations to be considered for permanent membership on the Security Council. We reaffirm that support today, as we are talking about this institution. We do that every time the issue arises and will continue to do so.

Our country has been participating with great interest in the work of the Working Group in an attempt, to the extent possible, to make effective progress. We have encountered obvious difficulties, but they must not discourage us; rather they should lead us to pool our full efforts and expectations for the initiative introduced by the Secretary-General, when, just a few days ago in the Assembly, he called for the creation of a group of eminent personalities to, among other things, review the functioning of the main organs of the United Nations and to recommend ways of strengthening the Organization. We look forward with great optimism to the outcome of that work and the selection of those personalities, which should be representative of the full context of the United Nations membership.

Our Organization, like any system, will not be able to improve or recover from the ills afflicting it if it does not receive comprehensive treatment that deals appropriately with all organs that are not functioning properly and that are causing dysfunction within the system. That treatment must involve the Security Council, which, as a main organ of our United Nations and as an essential component of achieving substantial change, must also be altered and reformed.

To the extent that we apply the saying that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure, we will be ensuring a healthy and sustainable life for our Organization. Toward that end, we strongly appeal to all Member States to continue to strive and to focus our determination to attain that goal.

Mr. McIvor (New Zealand): Last year we combined the debate on the Security Council report with that on Security Council reform. That was a good approach. It saved time, and the discussion reflected obvious linkages between the issues involved in the two items. We hope that that practice can formally be reinstated in the future, as suggested by a number of previous speakers. I will nevertheless comment today on both items to avoid having taken the floor twice.

Events over the past year have made the need for Security Council reform greater than ever. The Council has had an extraordinary profile around the world. People watched closely as deliberations on Iraq proceeded. There was a very public debate about the effectiveness of the Council in dealing with threats to international peace and security.

Many rightly questioned whether a body designed in the aftermath of the Second World War could be effective some 60 years later. Yet despite such criticisms, the fact remained that there was widespread global support for the Council's role and great

importance attached to its decisions. People want a Security Council playing a lead role in international peace and security; they also want a more representative Council. There is near-universal agreement on the need for the Organization to evolve and to reflect the world in which we now find ourselves. The challenge is how to respond to that need.

New Zealand's views on Security Council reform are well known. We strongly believe that to be credible and effective, the Council must have the full trust and support of the international community. As the pre-eminent global legal body addressing threats to peace and security, the Security Council must be seen as more representative of today's international community.

Trust and respect derive from both the conduct and the composition of the Council; one without the other is not enough. The Working Group has made progress over the past few years on working methods. That should continue. But no matter how effectively the existing Council discharges its duties, if it is not considered sufficiently representative, its authority is diminished.

The Working Group cannot break the impasse on structural Security Council reform. Our hope must now be that the Secretary-General's timely initiative to establish a panel on United Nations reform will bring fresh impetus to Security Council reform. New Zealand fully supports the Secretary-General's holistic approach. The panel should not shy away from difficult, fundamental questions. We look forward to an independent, honest and fresh assessment of where we need to go from here.

We would also appeal to Member States to make the most of the opportunity afforded by the Secretary-General's panel. We very much hope that Member States will be open to this process. While we may have anxieties about the options and the potential implications of those options, we should not step away from exploring the possibilities. In particular, we would stress that reform of the Security Council — or indeed of the whole United Nations — is not a zero-sum game; it is not about winners and losers. We can all be winners. If discussions are premised on the vital need to make the Security Council more effective in the twenty-first century, then everyone will have gained.

Finally, I should like to comment briefly on the Council's report (A/58/2). This year's report again reflects the increasing workload and complexity of issues before the Council. There have been encouraging developments to further enhance Council consultation with Member States in a number of areas, not least peacekeeping, where there have been real efforts to engage with troop-contributing countries. In terms of our own region, New Zealand particularly welcomes the Council's open approach to discussions on Bougainville and Timor-Leste.

However, there have been some areas where the Council has remained worryingly closed to outside consultation. While we recognize that there are times when it is important for consultations to take place behind closed doors to achieve consensus, it is important nonetheless that Member States be kept informed of the issues under consideration. Closed doors can lead all too easily to misunderstanding and misinformation. Lack of communication can undermine the very work the Council is trying to achieve.

The bottom line is that, more than ever before, we look to the Council to recognize that all Member States have an inherent legitimate interest in being kept informed — and sometimes actively engaged — on issues under Council consideration. That principle was wisely recognized in the Charter. It is a logical consequence of the fact that the Security Council's decisions are binding upon Member States in international law. They affect and belong to us all.

Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia): The basic pretext for our debate is well known and simple: the importance and the workload of the Security Council are increasing year after year, in parallel to the complexity of issues in international relations. The Council is in dire need of reform. We all know that it must be reformed, and we have a number of ideas as to how to reform it, but we are unable to reform it. So what shall we do about reform?

After having listened to the statements during the general debate of the fifty-eighth General Assembly session, delivered by the Presidents, Prime Ministers and Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Member States — as well as the statements delivered under the item of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/58/1) — we have no doubt that strong support exists for reform of the Security Council. We have not heard a single voice raised against it. In the Millennium Declaration, our Presidents and Prime Ministers unquestionably declared their political will to embrace the process of Council reform. Yet, after more than a decade of negotiations, we have not moved towards any genuine progress in reforming the Security Council.

How can we explain that inconsistency? Providing an honest and comprehensive answer to that question is the first essential step towards reform. Talking about reform will not suffice if we are not ready to identify the bottlenecks and to have an open, straightforward discussion on the matter.

We have taken a number of small positive steps forward in the past year. We highly praise the new format of the report of the Security Council, which represents a notable improvement in the Council's working methods. In its new format, the report is much easier to read and represents a well-organized working document with a greater degree of transparency. It provides us with a comprehensive picture of all the work done by the Security Council in these uncertain times.

And indeed these times are uncertain, as much as they are a challenge to international peace and security. They are underlined by new types of conflicts, like the Iraq war, and by more complex peacekeeping missions, like some of those in Africa. As the Secretary-General has rightly stated, we must be aware of the changes in the international security environment that represent challenges — which today are predominantly global — to peace and security. That is another reason why it is more important than ever before to have an efficient and representative Security Council — one that has the confidence of the entire membership and is supported by world public opinion.

We deeply believe that we cannot achieve our objective through partial reform, tackling only bits and pieces of the problem. We need comprehensive and thorough reform that can be achieved only in a package encompassing all the elements of cluster I and cluster II issues. Provisional or partial solutions will only force us into an endless circle of new rounds of negotiations. Throughout the years, we have demonstrated our ability to debate. It is now time to show that we can produce results, not merely words.

Major decisions on Council reform remain beyond our reach. We place our confidence in the President of the General Assembly — who will chair the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform during this session — in finding new avenues to begin the negotiation process. The importance of the problem is such that no obstacle or disagreement, regardless of its nature or size, can be an excuse for derailing the debate.

It is not only time that is pressing us to find solutions to Security Council reform; it is also an ever-changing political environment and its dynamics that might leave the Organization behind because it is too rigid in its structure or too slow in its reactions. The ability to deal effectively with pressing issues — whether of a political or an organizational nature — is the ultimate sign of the Organization's relevance. If we want the Organization to remain relevant and to maintain its pivotal role in the new era, we must urgently address the problem of Council reform despite all the problems and political sensitivities we may encounter.

Croatia stands ready to participate actively in the forthcoming work and to make its contribution to successful reform.

Mr. Mra (Myanmar): First of all, I should like to express my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador Negroponte of the United States of America, President of the Security Council for the month of October 2003, for introducing the report of the Council covering the period from 1 August 2002 to 31 July 2003 (A/58/2). As the Security Council is an organ primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, its report is an important document for consideration by the General Assembly.

My delegation is pleased to observe that the Security Council has taken a number of initiatives in introducing reforms into its working methods. The holding of frequent public meetings and wrap-up sessions and the issuing of press releases containing all statements by the President of the Council on behalf of its members show a growing trend towards transparency. The report did not lose focus in dealing with priority issues such as Iraq, the Middle East, Afghanistan and Africa. However, there have been comments that an analytical report would serve a more useful purpose than a merely descriptive report.

Thematic discussions allow participation by the larger membership in the Council's work. In my delegation's opinion, such discussions can be fruitful only when they are directly related to the Council's work. Linking extraneous issues that are not directly related to the agenda of the Council can only serve to complicate matters and to detract from its original purpose.

Counter-terrorism remains one of the Security Council's major areas of concern. My delegation attaches importance to the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, established pursuant to resolution 1373

(2001). The fact that an overwhelming number of Member States have submitted reports to the Committee detailing the measures they have taken against terrorism amply demonstrates their resolve and commitment in fighting terrorism. The initiative taken by the Committee to convene a major meeting of some 60 international, regional and subregional organizations on 6 March 2003 will also enhance the effectiveness of global action against terrorism.

Myanmar is cooperating closely with the Counter-Terrorism Committee. It has already submitted to the Committee its second report, along with relevant documents, reflecting the legislative and executive measures that the Government has taken. The third report is being prepared in coordination with the various ministries concerned, and we intend to submit it in due course. Here, my delegation would like to reiterate that Myanmar is opposed to all forms of terrorism.

While some of the procedural changes and initiatives undertaken by the Security Council are to be commended, many of us continue to be concerned over the unrepresentative and undemocratic nature of the composition and decision-making process of the Council. The Millennium Summit endorsed the need to extensively reform the Security Council in all its aspects. Although there are differing opinions, there is at least a consensus view that, at the bare minimum, the Council should be expanded to conform to the present-day realities of the enlarged membership of the United Nations. We welcome the progress achieved so far in the consideration of issues dealing with the working methods of the Security Council, although substantial differences in views remain on other issues.

Myanmar has had several occasions in the past to state its position on reform of the Security Council. Myanmar holds the view — together with other members of the Non-Aligned Movement — that Council expansion and reform should be integral parts of a single package. If the Security Council is to become more representative of contemporary political and economic realities, it should be expanded in both categories.

On the question of the veto — which is one of the key issues of Council reform — an ideal solution in the democratization process should be the abolition of the veto. However, pending such abolition, we should limit its application to the provisions of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. It is also our view that new permanent members of the Security Council should enjoy the same rights and privileges as the current members.

My delegation agrees with the Working Group's recommendations that, based on discussions in preceding years, cluster I and cluster II issues should continue to be considered in a similar and balanced manner.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan has stated that "Reform is not an event; it is a process" (*A/51/950, para. 25*). It has been 10 years since that process started with the establishment of the Working Group in 1993. Once, in 1965, the Security Council was expanded from 11 to 15 members. The United Nations is therefore not a stranger to reform. With a demonstration of realism and political will, we can take the reform process nearer to achieving its goal. In order to build further on the results so far achieved and to further accelerate the process, my delegation fully supports the view that the Working Group should continue its activities at the current session of the General Assembly.

Before concluding, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to Mr. Jan Kavan, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session and Chairman of the Working Group; and to Ambassadors Thorsteinn Ingólffson and Chuchai Kasemsarn, who served as Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, for a job well done.

Mr. Mmualefe (Botswana): I have the honour to present this statement on behalf of Ambassador Dube of Botswana, as he has been detained at other meetings this afternoon.

Allow me, at the outset, to align myself with and reiterate my delegation's commitment to the position of the African Group on this important matter.

It is now ten years since the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council began its deliberations. Yet, regrettably, very little progress has been achieved to date. The current report of the Open-ended Working Group, as with previous reports, reflects considerable divergence of views on issues related to the expansion of the membership of the Council, as well as its decision-making, including the use of the veto. We note, however, that there is more agreement on how the Council should conduct its business, that is, its

working methods, and that, in practice, there are now more open debates in which non-members participate.

The present membership of the Security Council is not reflective of the geo-political realities of the twenty-first century, which are significantly different from those of 1945, when the United Nations was founded. The United Nations of today has all world cultures and socio-political systems represented in its membership. The Security Council of today does not in any form reflect this social, cultural and linguistic diversity. Its composition remains predominantly Euro-centred, a fact which, by itself, is a reflection of the lingering influence and dominance of a bygone period of history and which can no longer be acceptable in the twenty-first century.

The challenges before the United Nations are now varied and complex. They require the participation of all Member States if we are to confront them effectively. The responsibility of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security, in particular, has greatly increased. The demise of the cold war has not resulted in the peace dividends we all hoped for. Instead, complex and destructive intra- and inter-State conflicts have erupted, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction has not been halted.

The authority and integrity of the Security Council is now being tested as never before. It is the responsibility of all Member States to ensure its effectiveness. It would thus defy logic if the membership of the Security Council, especially in the non-permanent category, remained unchanged and the greater number of the United Nations membership did not participate on equal terms in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Various proposals on Security Council reform have been provided by regional groups of the United Nations membership and by individual Member States, in the context of the Open-ended Working Group and other General Assembly debates, and these are worthy of consideration. My delegation aligns itself with the position of the African Union in which the Union seeks the allocation of two permanent and two new non-permanent seats, the utilization of which would be determined by the African Union itself. This and other proposals from other regional groups, particularly from developing countries, are worthy of the consideration by this Assembly.

Frustrating as it may be that, after years of intense debate on this issue, not much progress has been achieved, we should not relent in our efforts to achieve meaningful reform of the Security Council. My delegation attaches great importance to the issue of Council reform because it is central to the success and existence of our Organization. For us, it is important that the membership of the Security Council truly reflect the membership of the United Nations in terms of representation. Bringing developing countries into membership of the Security Council on the basis of the sovereign equality of States would help strengthen their role in the maintenance of peace and security.

The working methods of the Security Council also require further improvement. More public debates should be held with the general membership of the United Nations, so that decisions that the Security Council makes reflect the collective will of the international community. Informal consultations of the Council on various issues should become an exception, and should not substitute for transparency and accountability.

The use of the veto, enjoyed by the five permanent members of the Security Council, requires urgent review. Although there may have been strong arguments by some permanent members of the Council to the effect that it is an effective decision-making tool, in practice it has been used by some to preserve narrow national interests, and this clearly is an untenable situation. The veto should have no place in an appropriately expanded Security Council, and should be replaced with a democratic decision-making procedure based on the principle of the sovereign equality of States.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Botswana's commitment to the comprehensive reform of the Security Council to ensure that all States, large or small, can play their rightful role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Botswana will continue to play its part in the Open-ended Working Group. We also welcome the decision of the United Nations Secretary-General to appoint a high-level panel of eminent personalities, which will review ways of strengthening the United Nations.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): Mr. President, I apologize to you for speaking at great length, yesterday, on the report of the Security Council. I will try to be briefer today, as I speak about the question before us.

There are two reasons why we can be briefer today. One is, of course, that we have spoken on this subject for almost ten years now. We have given all the speeches that we can possibly give on the subject and if any of my colleagues are interested in what our views are, we will be happy to share with them some very thoughtful, long and comprehensive speeches that we have given. The second reason why we can afford to be briefer today is that, when we come to discuss the Secretary-General's proposals for revitalization, we will of course, once again, revisit the issue of Security Council reform.

So what I propose to do today is to present three points. The first point is about why we have not made any progress so far in Security Council reform. The second point is about the roles and interests of small States in Security Council reform and the third point is about the question of the veto power, which I see everyone has been addressing. I'll try to do this as quickly as I can.

My first point is a question: why has reform of the Security Council not succeeded? Of course, the great paradox here is that, if one listens to all the statements made so far, there seems to be almost total agreement that the Council is probably a relic from 1945 and, as we are now in the twenty-first century, it must be reformed. Yet despite such nearly unanimous agreement, we are not moving ahead with reform. We believe that the key reason that we have not moved ahead with it after 10 years of discussions is that we have put the cart before the horse. We are discussing the shape of the cart and how many seats it should have — that is, how many first-class, second-class and third-class seats here should be in a reformed Security Council — but we have not yet agreed where we want to take the cart once we have put a horse in front of it. Indeed, that is the fundamental problem in this House: among the 191 Member States, there is as yet no consensus on what the Security Council's primary role and responsibilities should be.

By the way, I can say that, when Singapore was on the Security Council, several members compared the Council's work to that of a fire department. A fire department — like the New York Fire Department — reacts automatically, regardless of whether the fire is on Park Avenue or in Harlem, the Bronx or some other area. But the Security Council, whose job is to react to conflicts, does not react in such a dispassionate fashion. It reacts when the interests of the major Powers are affected and remains silent when they are not affected. Why have we allowed that to happen? The reason is that Member States have not reached a common understanding of what the Council's role and responsibilities should be. So my first point is, let us first agree what its role and responsibilities should be before we move on to discussing such matters as its structure and its expansion.

My second point concerns the role of the interests of small States. It is clear that neither the major Powers nor the middle Powers need the Security Council for their security. But the small States — especially those with populations of fewer than 10 million — are the countries that need the Council the most, and they need an effective Council that works. How does one explain to States with populations of fewer than 10 million — which make up approximately half of the membership of the United Nations — that an expansion of the Council will suit their interests and indeed will make the world a safer and more secure place? We hope that those who aspire to permanent membership or reform of the Security Council will address that point to small States and explain how a reformed Council will benefit them.

Let me mention in passing that it is unfortunate that small States are put in the position of having to choose between their bilateral interests and their multilateral interests. In their bilateral interests, they have reasons to maintain good relationships with the major Powers and the middle Powers, so they indicate their support for this or that candidate. But their multilateral interests lie in having an effective Security Council, not necessarily one that is as large as it can possibly be. I think it is unfair to put small States in the position of having to choose between their bilateral interests and their multilateral interests, and we hope that that will now cease.

My third and final point concerns the question of the veto. Here, the tragedy is that all the attention is focused on the formal use of the veto. I hope our colleagues heard what the representative of Spain said yesterday about the hidden vetoes — the ones that are used every day in the course of informal consultations. No light has been shed on all those hidden vetoes, but we need to understand their role within the actual functioning of the Security Council. Frankly, if we are going to talk about expanding the Council and adding new permanent members to it, all of us should first reach an understanding of the responsibilities of permanent membership. The one great mistake we

made in 1945 was to give away the privilege of the veto power without attaching any responsibilities to that privilege. Consequently, we face a very strange situation today. When there is a crisis in the world and one turns to the major Powers and the middle Powers to ask them to help resolve it, they tend to run away; very few of them will volunteer to help to resolve it. On the other hand, when one says that there are permanent seats available on the Security Council — which gives one primary responsibility for handling threats to international peace and security — there are many volunteers. The reason why there are many volunteers for permanent membership is that there are no responsibilities attached to permanent membership. So we should like to suggest that, if the Council truly wants to resolve the question of who should have permanent membership and who should have the veto, it should attach specific, defined responsibilities to permanent membership and the veto power. I think that might set us on the road to Security Council reform.

In conclusion, to avoid any misunderstanding, it is important that I emphasize that we support reform of the Security Council. As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, we support its views on reform and expansion of the Council, and we have said before that many countries — including my own — would agree that, when general agreement is reached on expansion of the Council, Japan and Germany should be among the new permanent members. Those are things we have said consistently, and we stand by them. Frankly, however, we believe that if we are to move ahead with Security Council reform, we must first return to basics.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the beginning of the current Assembly session, the world's leaders agreed with near unanimity that the challenges faced by the Organization are unprecedented. One of the greatest difficulties confronting our world today is the confusion in the system of basic values and concepts and others' misuse of that confusion out of either good or ill will. That has led to chaos in the system of international relations. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that some presume that they have a monopoly on facts and can see what others cannot, and then act on that basis.

Our past deliberations on Security Council reform were based on realistic criteria that attempted to respond to the changed circumstances that determine, inter alia, the Council's membership, its working methods and the veto power. Today, it is no longer a question of expanding the Security Council's membership; our deliberations proceed from the need to meet the new challenges facing the system of international peace and security. The Secretary-General was correct when, in paragraph 2 of his report on the work of the Organization (A/58/1), he said:

> "Undoubtedly, in the area of peace and security, it has been a trying year for the United Nations. The war in Iraq severely tested the principle of collective security and the resilience of the Organization. Rarely in its fifty-eight-year history have such dire forecasts been made about the United Nations. The United Nations will emerge strengthened if we make a measured appreciation of what happened ...".

Security Council reform should be based on several premises that are in keeping with the Charter and the historical circumstances, under which the United Nations was founded. The preamble of the Charter states:

> "We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice has brought untold sorrow to mankind"

The founders of the United Nations, intent on avoiding the historical circumstances that led to two world wars, emphasized several concepts related to the system of international peace and security, the most important of which is the implementation of the principle of collective security in order to give legitimacy to this principle. The Secretary-General emphasized this in his report on the Millennium Declaration, where he pointed out that cooperation between the countries of the world is more essential now than ever. He also emphasized that the Charter should be the basis for providing legitimacy to all action at the international level.

Democracy in international relations has became more urgent than ever in a world in which communications networks, relations, ties, interests and disadvantages have gone beyond regional and local frameworks. The veto power is one of the most pronounced manifestations of the absence of democracy in international relations. If it is true that any organization in the world needs to strive to achieve stability, then justice should be its guiding source, in keeping with the relationship between justice and law in any legal system.

Based on that same concept, and in keeping with the resolutions of the Non-Aligned Movement adopted at its summits and conferences, the use of veto should be restricted, with the long-term aim of its elimination, as it has been proven that international peace and security have been greatest victims of the veto. It has been abused and has become a tool for discrimination, not only between countries, but also in the implementation of United Nations resolutions, including of the Security Council itself. Therefore, it is important now to establish controls and criteria to avert the arbitrary use of veto.

Reform of the Security Council and increasing its membership should be an integral part of a joint comprehensive endeavour, in which due consideration would be given to the principle of equal sovereignty among nations and equitable geographical representation, as well as to achieving transparency, responsibility and democracy in the working methods of the Security Council, including its decision-making process.

Expansion of the Council membership in both permanent and non-permanent categories must ensure equitable representation for developing countries, in accordance with the position of the Non-Aligned Movement. In that connection, we wish to mention that the Arab Group has always emphasized at previous consultations the need for a permanent seat to be allocated to the Arab countries, as part of any future reform process. Arab countries, supporting expansion of the Council membership, should have one permanent seat, to be filled on a rotating basis and in keeping with the procedures adopted by the League of Arab States. Two non-permanent seats should also be allocated to Arab countries, to be filled on a rotating basis, as is the current practice. The Council membership should be expanded to include 26 members.

Discussing reform of the Security Council and increasing its membership prompts us to attach special importance to the working methods of the Council, which is no less important an issue than is expansion of the Council. This requires the establishment of controls and criteria, emphasized by summits of the Non-Aligned countries, in a way that ensures non-use of the veto in an arbitrary manner and that strengthens democracy and transparency in decision-making and that ensures implementation of Security Council resolutions in a more balanced and equitable way, without resorting to double standards.

Expansion of the Council should be guided by the fact that its ability to mobilize the greatest possible support for its resolutions and measures would be strengthened if they were seen to represent the international community more broadly, in keeping with Article 24 of the Charter, which stipulates that the Security Council act on behalf of the United Nations general membership. Security Council reform should also be carried out pursuant to Article 108 of the Charter.

Enormous efforts have been made during the past 10 years, and the delicate nature of the reform process requires that we achieve consensus. Sincere efforts alone can facilitate the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform, which is the only framework for achieving that desired objective.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): Having not taken part in the debate earlier this week on the report of the Security Council, I would like to use this opportunity, with your permission, Mr. President, to thank the President of the Security Council for the month of October, Ambassador Negroponte of the United States, for his introduction of the report of the Security Council.

I noticed many speakers in that debate referred, on the one hand, to the report of the Security Council and, on the other hand, to the item now under consideration: the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. In my first draft for this statement I intended to welcome a decision to convene a joint debate, as it would be a manifestation of the streamlining of the General Assembly, to which Iceland attaches importance. I fully agree with the views expressed by the Permanent Representative of Canada at the outset of his statement yesterday that we could have made do with one debate on these issues.

Iceland's views on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has been on record for years. It is essential that the composition of the Council better reflect the membership of the United Nations as a whole.

Developments since 1945 include the United Nations membership growing from the original 51 States to 191 States, as we have often heard. The decision in 1963 to increase the number of non-permanent seats from six to ten, which took effect in 1965, was in response to demands based on the fact that Member States had greatly increased in numbers. By 1965 they totalled 117. Since that year, 74 new

States have become members of the United Nations. This should be reflected in the composition of the Security Council. We must safeguard the credibility of the Council and at the same time secure its efficiency. We realize that there is no easy balance between equitable representation and the performance of the Council. However, no stone should be left unturned in our efforts to achieve that goal.

The growing practice of open Security Council meetings is to be welcomed. I agree with the Permanent Representative of Guatemala who in last year's debate stated that this practice has contributed to the closer involvement of all States in the Council's work by providing the opportunity to express their views on subjects that the Council considers. Further measures should be taken, however, to increase transparency in the decision-making process and thus add to the welcome steps already taken by the Council, without weakening its capabilities.

Iceland supports an increase in both permanent and non-permanent seats on the Council. New permanent members should have the same rights and obligations as the current permanent members. The veto right should be restricted, and an obligation to state the reason for its use should be established. Such a statement should include the reason why a permanent member considers a matter to be of vital importance, as requested recently by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland Halldór Ásgrímsson in the general debate of the General Assembly (see A/58/PV.14). Or, as my colleague from Singapore so eloquently stated here a few minutes ago, we should attach responsibility to the veto.

I suspect that my statement today will not mark a significant development or change in the debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. In truth, I doubt, with all due respect to my colleagues, if any of the statements in this debate will be such a landmark.

The declared aim regarding this issue is, however, clear to every delegation, since in September 2000, at the largest-ever gathering of world leaders, they agreed to intensify efforts for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. That agreement was a landmark.

The positions of United Nations Members are mostly known. We have been working hard and long hours — 10 years as a matter of fact — in the Open-ended Working Group to reach our common goal, but with very limited results as regards the major issues: the expansion of the Council and the question of the veto. We should not, however, underestimate the differences among us, although we know the reform options have been narrowed down and are on the table. We have the common goals of the reform, democratization, and strengthened legitimacy of the Security Council. We believe that the Open-ended Working Group is still the most appropriate forum for negotiation on this important issue, and we urge all Member States to show flexibility and a willingness to compromise in order to realize the aims of our leaders, stated so clearly three years ago.

Let us heed the Millennium Declaration of our leaders and the recent challenge by the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, to agree on concrete reforms by 2005.

Mr. Taha (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): It would not be far from the truth to say that all Member States want to see reform of the principal organs of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council. Article 24 of the Charter establishes the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of the general membership. Here, the membership is calling for reform in the composition of the Council.

My delegation stresses the validity of paragraph 13 of the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/58/323), which states that the United Nations finds itself at a critical juncture: unless the Security Council regains the confidence of States and of world public opinion, individual States will increasingly resort exclusively to their own national perceptions of emerging threats and to their own judgement on how best to address them. To forestall such a development, the United Nations will have to demonstrate its ability to deal with the most difficult issues, and to do so effectively.

The principle of equitable representation is enshrined in the Charter. We must therefore be mindful of that principle when hiring or appointing individuals to posts in this Organization.

The fact that there has been a significant increase in the membership of the United Nations to 191 requires the Organization to improve its effectiveness and its readiness to adapt to the expanded membership. That makes it particularly necessary to expand the Security Council and to achieve greater transparency in its working methods.

We endorse the points made by the Secretary-General in his statement at the 7th meeting, on 23 September, with respect to establishing a panel of eminent personalities to address, inter alia, the issue of reforming the Council. We agree that the Council's ability to muster the greatest possible support for its resolutions and decisions will be strengthened if the Council is viewed as representing the whole international community and the geographical and political realities of the contemporary world.

The use of the veto — itself the outgrowth of international circumstances differing from today's — for various purposes and by a limited number of countries does not reflect the Charter concepts of justice and equality among nations. The use of the veto also contradicts the principle of human rights in general. We therefore echo those who have called for the elimination of the veto right, considering it to be a privilege that contradicts the sacred principles enshrined in the Charter. We also call for restricting its use until we have the political will to eliminate it entirely.

Lastly, we underscore the need to achieve balance in the relationship between the General Assembly, the principal body in our Organization, and the Security Council, its executive arm, in an effort to strengthen cooperation between the two. That should be done so that they can truly reflect the will of the international community and so as to put an end to issues that the Council failed in dealing with, and particularly to put an end to Israel's occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories and to resolve the whole Middle East situation.

Mr. Choisuren (Mongolia): Mongolia has been following closely the discussions on the reform of the United Nations and its institutions. The Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, which was established almost a decade ago, has held extensive negotiations on the ways and means to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of that unique body. Today, we are addressing one of the most important, yet difficult and controversial, issues dealing with the reform of the Security Council.

The urgency with which we need to tackle reform issues has been made abundantly clear. The Secretary-General himself has drawn our attention to that fact time and again. He has pointed out that Member States need to take a hard look at the existing architecture of international institutions and the perceived lack of legitimacy of the Security Council's decisions due to the fact that its composition has remained unchanged since 1945. My delegation, like many others, is in full agreement with that appraisal. In fact, during the general debate at this session of the General Assembly, many heads of delegation expressed at the highest level their willingness to speed up the reform process and to make their contributions to that end. My delegation also shares the concern over the slow pace of the reform process of the United Nations. It is evident that innovative approaches and firm political will to change the present situation are the prerequisites for a successful reform.

My delegation believes that there are several fundamental factors pointing to the need for such reforms. Today's world is completely different than it was over 50 years ago, when the system of collective security was defined. During that half-century, we have witnessed such great historic events as the demise of the colonial system, the collapse of the communist dictatorial system, the end of the cold war era and the emergence of a great number of independent States. We are now witnessing the great advance of democratization and globalization. A universal Organization such as the United Nations and a powerful body such as the Security Council, which is responsible for maintaining international peace and security, should certainly not lag behind in such historical changes.

Mongolia wants to see the reform of the Security Council take place along the lines of democratization. In that context, we have consistently supported a just and equitable enlargement of the Security Council by increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent seats and by ensuring equal representation for both developing and developed countries. The questions of increasing the effectiveness and democratization of the working methods of the Security Council and reviewing the power of the veto should constitute the essential elements of the reform. My delegation believes that further enhancing openness and transparency and equitably enlarging the composition of the Council would make the Security Council a more democratic and representative body.

At the same time, we are keenly aware of — and indeed share — the concern of other delegations that expanding the membership of the Security Council alone will not necessarily mean increasing its

effectiveness. Another track of Security Council reform could therefore be aimed at the goal of increasing its effectiveness. In that respect, we attach importance to further democratizing its working methods and decision-making practices. In that regard, the issue of the power of the veto has always been raised, including the issue of whether the veto should be retained or restricted and the question of when and under what circumstances it should be used. Clearly, that is one the most important components of the reform of the Security Council, and we cannot just shy away from it.

Looking back at our recent experience, the contentious issues that have prevented the members of the Security Council from reaching common positions and taking collective action were the differing perceptions regarding the level of threat posed to regional or international security, the extent to which peace had been breached and the course of action to be taken in that regard. In my view, therefore, developing and refining a checklist of criteria by which to measure the level and seriousness of a threat is one of the important tasks facing the United Nations. The recommendations of the high-level panel of eminent persons to be established by the Secretary-General will be highly welcome in that respect. The Security Council could determine an adequate and timely response to an emerging threat on the basis of such criteria.

Our determination to carry out the reform of the institutions of the United Nations is motivated by our genuine desire to strengthen multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations in international affairs and to bolster the capacity of the Organization to respond to new challenges. My delegation hopes that the ideas put forward by different delegations during this session and the findings and recommendations of the high-level panel of eminent persons will enable us to reach a satisfactory solution to these extremely important issues.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): My delegation is very grateful to you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor, but even more so for your strong leadership in the reform process of the United Nations. Austria fully supports your efforts to advance the reform agenda, especially that of the General Assembly. We all agree that 2003 has been a very difficult year for the Organization. The urgent call for reform by the Secretary-General has to be taken up by all Member States.

As host to one of the headquarters of the United Nations, Austria shares a strong sense of responsibility for the effective and efficient functioning of the Organization. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a high-level panel of eminent persons to submit reform proposals in time for consideration by the next session of the General Assembly.

The Millennium Declaration set out a vision for peace, security and sustainable development in our century. We need a fair and consistent collective security system, based on a common understanding of the major threats of today's world and what our common responses should be. It is of critical importance that we put the plight of individual human beings in the centre of our debate.

Austria strongly believes that the strengthening of the main organs of the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council, will provide a framework for achieving the goals of the Millennium Declaration.

The Security Council is at odds with the geopolitical reality of the twenty-first century. It neither reflects the growing number of Members of the United Nations, nor the regional balance. As a result, some question the legitimacy of the Council's decision-making process. Enlarging and balancing its membership, as well as increasing its transparency is essential.

We welcome the recent efforts of the Security Council to increase the transparency of its working methods by conducting more open debates. But more needs to be done. Progress in the Open-ended Working Group cannot be limited to the reform of working methods. The deadlock in the deliberations on membership and veto power needs to be overcome. As a first step, it might help to eliminate extreme positions which do not enjoy wide support. This could reduce the plethora of options before us. Maintaining efficiency, as well as the greatest degree of transparency and legitimacy, must remain equally important goals that should be guiding our reform efforts.

The reform debate of the Security Council has lasted more than ten years without producing tangible results. Progress can only be achieved if the underlying political impasse is overcome by a reconsideration of positions in the major capitals of the world. All sides must be prepared to compromise.

Programme of work

The President: In the morning of Thursday, 16 October 2003, the General Assembly will take up, as the first item, agenda item 124, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations", to consider a report of the Fifth Committee to be issued as document A/58/432. The General Assembly will then continue its consideration of agenda item 39, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support", as well as sub-items (a) and (b). Once the debate on agenda item 39 is concluded, the General Assembly will resume its consideration of agenda item 56, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". Once the debate on agenda item 56 is concluded, the General Assembly will resume its consideration of agenda item 11, entitled "Report of the Security Council", in order to hear my assessment of the debate on that item and to take note of the report of the Security Council, on the understanding that that item will remain open for consideration during the fifty-eighth session.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

United Nations A/58/PV.32

General Assembly

Fifty-eighth session

Official Records

32nd plenary meeting
Wednesday, 15 October 2003, 10 a.m.
New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 39

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/254)

Note by the Secretary-General on proposed revisions to programme 8 of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005: United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/58/83)

Report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/58/16, chapter III, section B, programme 8; chapter IV, section B)

(b) Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/352)

The President: As members are aware, this is the first time the Assembly is considering this new item, which consolidates items that in the past had been discussed separately in plenary meeting in the General Assembly. The purpose of this consolidation is to allow for a comprehensive, yet focused, approach to the debate on this most important issue.

In view of the wide interest in this critical topic, I am also pleased that we are having this debate early in the session.

With regard to sub-item (a) of agenda item 39, members will recall that at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2003, the General Assembly decided that, as part of its consideration of this agenda item, the Assembly would review the recommendations by the Committee for Programme and Coordination contained in document A/58/16, specifically in chapter III, section B, programme 8, and in chapter IV, section B of that document, as well as document A/58/83, which pertain to United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The Assembly decided that all relevant comments regarding these recommendations would be transmitted to the Fifth Committee prior to the Committee's consideration of the proposed medium-term plan and its revisions, and of the recommendations contained in the section entitled "Evaluation" of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

Before giving the floor to the first speaker on my list, I should like to inform members that, in a letter dated 10 October 2003 addressed to the President of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Western European and Other States for

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the month of October, requests that the General Assembly hear in plenary meeting statements by the Observer of the Holy See in the debates on agenda item 39, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support"; agenda item 40, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance"; agenda item 44, entitled "Culture of peace"; and agenda item 48, entitled "Fifty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

May I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear statements by the Observer of the Holy See in the debates on agenda items 39, 40, 44 and 48?

It was so decided.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Leonardo Santos Simão, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Mozambique, speaking on behalf of the African Union.

Mr. Simão (Mozambique): Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation, I am pleased once again to congratulate you upon your election as President of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. Under your able leadership, the General Assembly is making significant progress in tackling the various items in its agenda, and I am sure of a successful outcome of our work. You can therefore rest assured of our continued support and cooperation as you lead us over the next few months.

Today's debate is crucial to the future of Africa. Both the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa remain at the top of our agenda, both in Africa and at the international level. I am pleased that at long last we have all agreed on the need to address these issues together, as both development and conflict issues are two faces of the same coin, insofar as Africa is concerned.

Today, the African peoples are firmly engaged in making Africa a continent of hope. We are striving to achieve peace, stability and socio-economic development, while seeking to build strong foundations for democracy and good governance and to create better living conditions for our peoples.

In order to address these challenges, Africa has effectively seized control of her destiny and presented a visionary course of action, embodied in the creation of the African Union, as a means to provide the necessary institutional framework and political leadership.

NEPAD is an initiative that is led, owned and managed by the African Union. It constitutes a serious commitment to addressing the aspirations of the continent and its peoples. NEPAD, as our comprehensive development strategy, is key for the implementation of our vision for a better Africa.

After many years of efforts devoted to political emancipation, we have now embarked on a two-fold strategy. On the one hand, we are determined to ensure that conflicts, which have been ravaging our continent, can soon be an issue of the past. On the other hand, we are committed to ensuring that Africa takes its rightful place in the community of nations by embarking on a steady pattern of sustainable development, through the implementation of NEPAD.

It was with this ultimate goal in mind that the African Union met in Maputo to discuss the future of Africa and agree on important decisions that will lay the foundations of the African Union and contribute to an effective implementation of NEPAD. We therefore view this meeting of the General Assembly as an excellent opportunity to take stock of our common resolve to make NEPAD a tangible reality with benefits for Africa and, indeed, for the world at large.

We in Africa believe that, with the successful implementation of NEPAD, our continent will cease to be a burden and a permanent source of concern for the international community — due to violent conflicts, endemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, famine and the negative impact of natural disasters — and become an effective partner in the international arena.

One of the main pillars of NEPAD is the achievement and maintenance of peace, stability and security, widely regarded as prerequisites for an African renaissance and development. To this end, we are creating three fundamental institutions, in addition to the Commission of the African Union, in order for this vision to flourish.

The first one is the Peace and Security Council, an organ of the African Union for conflict prevention, management and resolution. The second is the Pan-African Parliament, a tool to ensure the full participation of the African peoples in the development and

economic integration of the continent. The third is the Economic, Social and Cultural Council, an advisory body composed of various social and professional groups of member States of the African Union, to ensure an effective participation of African civil society in the affairs of the Union.

Our efforts today are geared towards putting these three fundamental institutions in place, as soon as possible, to pave the way for NEPAD implementation.

The establishment of the short-term Action Plan, containing high priority projects in the areas of energy, transport, water and sanitation, information technology and health and education, is an important step forward. We are also making progress in producing the medium- to long-term Infrastructure Action Plan.

Furthermore, a Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Plan was jointly developed with the Food and Agriculture Organization, with the objective of addressing the current food crisis in Africa and laying the groundwork for the agricultural development of the continent.

Since the signing of the Constitutive Act of the African Union two years ago, we have placed emphasis on creating the institutional framework for overseeing the implementation of NEPAD at the regional level, integrating NEPAD priorities into our national development programmes and creating institutions to manage it, as a means of bringing about coherence in NEPAD matters within our own Governments.

At the same time, the African Peer Review Mechanism is taking shape, with an increasing number of member States of the African Union acceding to it. The operational structure of the Mechanism has been established, including the panel of eminent persons, and soon we will have an evaluation of the first two countries that are volunteering to be reviewed under this Mechanism.

In promoting NEPAD, we should be careful not to project it as something to come in the future. NEPAD, yes, is still in its infancy, but it is a sound and visible reality in Africa today. For example, the ongoing regional projects and many others still in the pipeline illustrate NEPAD in action. Similarly, the ongoing renewed efforts for conflict prevention, resolution and management are clear examples of NEPAD in action.

To this end, our feeling is that these efforts are having positive results in the overall area of conflicts. In fact, there are no new conflicts on our continent, and even those that now exist are a combination of either old conflicts which have not been resolved properly or seemingly new ones that can be traced back to the old ones. Overall, the balance in settling conflicts is positive, as illustrated by many positive examples underway in Africa, including Angola, Sierra Leone, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Burundi, all of which are on a steady path to full stability.

As for Burundi, President Chissano of Mozambique, in his address to the General Assembly last month, appealed to the Security Council to adopt a resolution formally endorsing the African Mission in Burundi and to take the necessary measures to provide political, financial and logistical support to this operation. The recent signing of an agreement in Pretoria between the Government of Burundi and the CNDD-FDD has more than vindicated the President's appeal for action by the Council.

These important developments clearly show that Africa is on the right track towards creating the necessary conditions for the successful implementation of NEPAD. Despite the ownership and leadership of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and despite the ongoing African initiatives for conflict prevention, management and resolution, the role of the international community is critical to a successful outcome of the two issues.

We encourage the United Nations to continue to concentrate its efforts in support of NEPAD. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa should be given the necessary support, in order to enable it to undertake its responsibilities.

We also encourage our development partners to live up to their commitments to Africa and to continue to assist NEPAD in its actions. For NEPAD to be successful it is essential that these partners support us in a coherent, predictable and sustainable manner, individually or within financial and trade institutions.

We in Africa will continue to shoulder our responsibilities, ensuring that our resolve and leadership to create a better future for the continent remain unabated.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia,

Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, and the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union sees today's debate as a great opportunity to focus the attention of the fifty-eighth General Assembly on African issues. We wish to take this opportunity to reiterate our commitment to the social and economic development of Africa, which remains, to use the words of the European Union Council of Ministers, our "privileged partner".

As we are all aware, peace and development are closely related, especially in the case of Africa. We welcome this year's new approach of addressing both issues under a single agenda item centred on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which has been adopted by African Heads of State as the development programme of the African Union. We also welcome the Secretary-General's reports prepared under the supervision of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, whose conclusions and recommendations we fully share and whose implementation we are ready to support. In particular, we commend the quality of the NEPAD report, outlining the challenges and constraints facing the African countries, the international community and the United Nations system.

The European Union has supported the NEPAD initiative from the beginning. We share the vision on which it is grounded, according to which Africa's development — considered as vital to Africans as to the entire world — must be framed in a partnership between the more developed countries and the African countries, where the latter have the primary responsibility in establishing the conditions for sustainable economic and social development and attracting private investments. Those conditions include improving governance, fighting corruption and enhancing transparency and the rule of law. NEPAD also rightly emphasizes the private sector's role in Africa as a means to help fully integrate the continent into the process of economic globalization.

I wish to reiterate the European Union's full support for the basic principles and political priorities addressed by NEPAD, which coincide with the values and objectives of the European Union external relations policy. The sectoral and thematic priorities of NEPAD are the same as those defined in the 2000 Cairo Plan of Action, adopted within the Europe-Africa dialogue. We believe that the African Union decision on the integration of NEPAD into the African Union will allow us to reinforce our dialogue with Africa on a broad scope of issues. We look forward to further deepening this dialogue at the first meeting of the Forum for the Partnership with Africa, organized by France and scheduled for 10 November 2003.

In this regard, we applaud the progress made by African countries in implementing NEPAD, particularly the establishment of the African Peer Review Mechanism. We hope that other African countries will join the 16 States that have acceded to it as of today, and we encourage them to start applying the Mechanism, as planned, by the end of the year. Drawing on the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, further efforts are also needed to integrate NEPAD goals and priorities into national, subregional and continental development plans; foster cooperation between the NEPAD Implementation Committee and the regional economic communities; generate popular support for NEPAD among the African people and mobilize domestic resources. In this context, the European Union would also like to underline the importance of a gender perspective.

The resolve of the African countries will have to be matched by the commitment of the more developed countries to support Africa — in a spirit of genuine partnership — by substantially enhancing the flow of resources and their effectiveness to the continent.

I would like to recall the collective European Union financial commitment, which was defined at the European Union Summit in Barcelona in March 2002, in the context of the preparations for the International Conference on Financing for Development at Monterrey, namely, to bring official development aid to 0.39 per cent of gross national income by 2006, as a first significant step towards the United Nations goal of 0.7 per cent. The European Union and its member States are respecting this schedule and are already providing almost half of all current development assistance to Africa.

The European Union and its member States have been at the forefront of the international community's cooperation with Africa in many areas. Given the establishment of NEPAD and the developments that have occurred within the African Union, the European Union now faces a new challenge: how to best integrate the pan-African dimension into its cooperation programmes.

The full version of my statement, which has been distributed, provides more information on some of the

concrete actions undertaken by the European Union in the key areas of health, debt and trade.

Regarding trade, the European Union recognizes the importance of cotton for the development of a number of African countries and understands the need for urgent action to address trade distortion in this market.

In response to the cotton initiative in the World Trade Organization (WTO), the European Commission of the European Union has proposed a constructive solution to address trade aspects linked to the depressed prices of cotton in the world market. It had been proposed to bind that solution in the WTO, but this has been postponed until a round is successfully concluded.

The European Union expresses its deep regret over the failure of the Cancún Conference. We remain convinced that a growing liberalization of world trade, together with development cooperation activities, can play a crucial role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. This is why the European Union feels that it is important to continue negotiations in the WTO framework as soon as all the parties are ready to participate again. All parties should demonstrate the determination and flexibility needed to honour the commitments enshrined in the Doha Development Agenda.

Today's meeting is also devoted to the promotion of lasting peace in Africa. Indeed, this is the first goal of the NEPAD Initiative, which rightly links development and stability. Our main focus must be on the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa. According to the established position of the European Union, our contribution to conflict prevention and management is to be made through the strengthening of African capacities, including support for regional and subregional organizations and civil society.

There have been important developments in this area. At its Durban Summit in July 2002, the African Union endorsed the Protocol for the establishment of the African Union Peace and Security Council, which will be the ruling organ of an African peace and security mechanism, including an African stand-by force. We hope that the number of ratifications required for the Protocol to enter into force can soon be reached.

In the meantime, at the African Union Summit in Maputo last July, the European Commission made an innovative proposal: to establish an African peace support operation facility in support of African peace operations, including the soon-to-be-launched African Union peace and security mechanism. This proposal is currently being developed in Brussels. It recognizes that there is no development without peace and aims to enlarge the range of aid intervention to include support for African-run peacekeeping operations.

We expect other donors to contribute to the establishment of the African peace and security mechanism, following the adoption at the Group of Eight Summit in Evian of a joint plan for strengthening African capacities to undertake peace support operations. This plan sets forth the ambitious goal of helping African countries to create, by 2010, a stand-by peace force capable of conducting peacekeeping operations and consistent with the African ownership of peace and security issues.

The creation of an African stand-by force will deter conflicts on the continent and supplement strong and effective cooperation between the United Nations, the European Union and the African Union. This trilateral cooperation must encompass both conflict prevention and aid. This was one of the main conclusions of the seminar that the European Union presidency organized in Rome, on 28 and 29 July, on conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa, which was attended by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Africa, Professor Gambari, among others, and also by qualified representatives of African civil society, who, we believe, play a crucial role.

The lessons learned from past experience prove that when the European Union, the United Nations and African countries act in a coherent and consistent manner, they can make a significant impact on peace, development and security. The most recent example was the European Union-led Operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The European Union-United Nations cooperation agreement on crisis management, signed in New York two weeks ago, will create further opportunities to demonstrate the European Union's commitment.

The European Union has much to offer Africa in terms of building capacity in conflict prevention, management and resolution, including peacekeeping and cross-cutting issues such as control of small arms and light weapons. While financial resources form the central pillar, there is also an important technical capacity-building and skills transfer that the European

Union can offer. We intend to foster discussion with our African partners on this sensitive issue within the framework of the ongoing Europe-Africa dialogue established at the Cairo Summit in April 2000. As was confirmed at the Ouagadougou ministerial conference in November last year, Europe wishes to make the strategic framework provided by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union, the heart of its political dialogue with Africa.

Ensuring Africa's inclusion in world advancement is a European Union priority. We are confident that this challenge can be achieved through continuing progress in the implementation of NEPAD and increasing support from the international community. While the European Union will pursue this objective in the framework of its ongoing dialogue with Africa, we also expect the United Nations to play an important role in fostering the partnership between the developed world and the African continent. I wish to pledge the European Union's full support for initiatives undertaken in this respect, and I wish the Special Adviser for Africa, Professor Gambari, every success in his important role.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): Norway has a strong commitment to Africa. We feel that there are many positive signs coming from the continent. We will continue our partnership with many African States and we will engage even deeper with African regional and subregional organizations.

Norway recognizes the important steps that are currently being taken by leaders on the African continent. With the development of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the new African Union, African leaders themselves are clearly taking charge of development on the continent. NEPAD is an initiative that is led, owned and managed by the African Union. I reaffirm Norway's support to the principles and political priorities in the NEPAD plan of action. We are encouraged by the progress made in establishing the African Peer Review Mechanism, and look forward to its implementation.

Norway commends the new Office of the Special Adviser for Africa for its efforts in putting together the Secretary-General's first consolidated report as regards NEPAD. In general, Norway supports the conclusions and recommendations of the report. We also welcome the progress report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We generally support the approach of the report and its recommendations.

Norway shares the basic view that conflict prevention, including early warning and preventive action, need to be at the centre of any multilaterally-driven peace-building process. Too often the legacy of a conflict is yet another conflict. We have to find ways to stop this cycle. Conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building are very much two sides of the same coin. As the Secretary-General correctly points out in his recent report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, we have to have a strategy that embraces the entirety of peace and security, development, and human rights, democracy and good governance. We must also have multilateral institutions that are up to the job and capable of implementing such comprehensive strategies.

Fighting poverty and promoting development is the soundest investment we can make in Africa. NEPAD is a significant step towards economic and social development and political stability. Norway has joined the rest of the international community in a commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, a road map for halving poverty by the year 2015. We have pledged to reduce child mortality by two thirds. We have pledged to halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

To reach the Millennium Development Goals, we need to focus on four points. First, the international community must improve the international framework conditions for trade, investment and debt. Secondly, national Governments in poor countries must focus on good governance and accountability. Thirdly, official development assistance must be increased and improved. Fourthly, the private sector and civil society must become active partners in poverty alleviation.

Violent conflicts have devastating consequences nationally, regionally and internationally. Conflicts cause displacement, high mortality rates, poverty and trauma, and divert resources away from development. Infrastructure is destroyed. Institutions are demolished. Investments are lost. Economies weaken. Institutions disintegrate, and, in some cases, States fail altogether.

Conflict has the potential to undo decades of human, economic and national development. In most cases, the United Nations only gets engaged in earnest after a conflict has broken out. The reasons are many,

but there is a high price to be paid in terms of loss of lives, human misery and setbacks in development.

There are many things we can do to prevent this from happening. We can do more to prevent economic factors such as diamonds and other natural resources from fuelling and prolonging conflicts. We can also take action to curb the illegal trade in small arms. Focusing on these two areas would enhance the effect of United Nations preventive action considerably.

Without peace and stability, our fight against poverty will fail. The Secretary-General has rightfully placed emphasis on the responsibility of African countries themselves for development in Africa. Regional and subregional organizations, and civil society, need to be involved in all stages of conflict resolution and in enhancing African capacity with regard to peacekeeping operations. In Maputo this year, we saw the formal launching of the African Union Peace and Security Council, and we have recently seen efforts made to settle disputes and conflicts on the subregional level that have led to positive results.

The role of the international community should primarily be to strengthen and support efforts and initiatives within the African countries themselves. We look forward to furthering our cooperation with the African community of States, together with the United Nations, regional and subregional structures and, not least, a vibrant civil society where gender and rights-based approaches are of key importance.

Norway, together with Italy, the United States and the United Kingdom, supports and participates in the Sudan peace talks. The talks are led by the regional organization the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and headed by Kenya. On 25 September this year, the parties signed an agreement on the principles for resolving the sensitive issues of security arrangements for a peace agreement. Hopefully, this will pave the way for the signing of a full peace agreement this autumn.

Peace in Sudan would end one of Africa's longest conflicts. Two million people have been killed and more than 4 million have become refugees or internally displaced over the last 20 years. A peace agreement would be a strong signal that parties of different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds can work and live together. It would hopefully have great impact on the stability of the region.

But Sudanese society will need to see the concrete results of a peace agreement. This will underline the fact that peace pays. Preparations for a broad-based and long-term assistance effort has been under way for some time. Norway, as co-chair of the IGAD Partners Forum, will host a donor conference as soon as there is a peace agreement.

The absence of war does not necessarily equal peace. Getting the parties to the negotiating table is only the first step. Then comes the harder part: the consolidation of peace in post-conflict situations. This involves promoting social and economic development, as well as addressing political and security issues.

Here, the international community can help build the necessary competence, capacity, institutions and processes for non-violent conflict resolution. And here, the United Nations has an indispensable role as partner in supporting NEPAD and thus, in promoting peace and development in Africa.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the last session of the General Assembly, we witnessed the launching of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as an African initiative based on the realities, aspirations, needs and problems of Africa. The African countries asserted their ownership of the substance of this Partnership and committed themselves to bringing to bear all their social, political, economic and environmental strengths and to establishing the necessary institutions to that end.

At the last African Summit, held in Maputo, Mozambique — and here I wish to express my thanks to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mozambique for having introduced this item today — NEPAD was adopted as the principal programme of the African Union, marking a new development in terms of African ownership of that initiative. This is also reflected in the efforts of the executive committee of that Partnership throughout the last year in the various areas in which it is active.

I would like to place on record our appreciation for the growing worldwide interest in NEPAD. In this regard, however, we would say that that interest is still purely moral and political in nature.

We greatly rely on the efforts of Ambassador Ibrahima Gambari and the group that he heads in the United Nations in terms of mobilizing more interest and international commitment in support of NEPAD

from the technical and financial standpoint. We underscore the need to unify and coordinate the activities of the United Nations agencies and other international organizations to help to fully implement this initiative, particularly with respect to questions relating to economic and social development. The activities should reflect the commitment of the international community to work for full implementation and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in a manner consonant with current efforts to promote international peace and security.

For us, NEPAD is a framework for a necessary partnership embodying the principle of reciprocal responsibility and commitment between Africa and the rest of the world. We aspire to a serious partnership that will recognize the particular characteristics and capabilities of Africa, that stems from a joint resolve to eradicate the causes of conflict, violence and economic marginalization and that lays the foundation for respect for the decisions taken by the peoples of the continent in terms of their development priorities and programmes to improve life there.

The United Nations contributions to peacekeeping and peace-building in Africa are increasingly important, particularly as regards the provision and mobilization of technical and financial support required for African institution-building and strengthening in that regard. The efforts on the continent to establish machinery to prevent and manage conflict in the context of the African Union, in particular the idea of establishing a Peace and Security Council require joint study by the United Nations and the African Union of the needs and requirements involved in those endeavours, while identifying areas in which the United Nations can provide assistance and possible sources of finance for those mechanisms.

In this regard, we would highlight the continent's priorities, especially with respect to combating the proliferation and smuggling of small arms and light weapons and strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and Africa and subregional organizations in such vital areas as peacekeeping operations. Here, we stress disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants and their reintegration into civilian life, the protection of civilians and all matters relating to the present and future conditions of refugees and displaced persons from a regional perspective.

In that context, I wish once again to stress that our work to end conflicts in Africa should not be limited to achieving or monitoring a ceasefire. Nor will they end by returning combatants to their barracks, protecting facilities or facilitating meetings of provisional or transitional governments. The real challenge lies in managing post-conflict situations that require a set of intertwined programmes for reconciliation and political, economic, social and administrative development.

The Government of Egypt takes note of what is stated in the Secretary-General's report on progress in the implementation of his recommendations on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The report attests to the various initiatives and programmes that the United Nations system is carrying out in African countries in post-conflict situations. We note that the Secretary-General has referred in his report to the important element of comprehensive and permanent peace-building. However, in that regard, I wish to note that progress in comprehensive and permanent peace-building depends on the continuous commitment of the international community to African countries emerging from conflict, through the provision of the financial resources necessary to continue to build upon the progress already made in the political and security areas.

In that regard, we stress the need to develop coordination mechanisms among United Nations organs and programmes for resolving and managing conflicts and for the building and maintaining of peace in Africa, including the international financial institutions, so that we can define the role and the activities of each programme and organ at every stage of conflict management. We must also prepare consistent and coherent plans and programmes that reflect the true nature and special needs of societies concerned, while avoiding overlapping activities and setting aside the least effective ones.

That way it will be possible to maximize the use of available human and material resources. Accordingly, the Egyptian delegation takes the view that the organs and programmes of the United Nations system should develop channels for daily communication and interaction with governmental and non-governmental structures and with national institutions in the countries concerned, as well as with the African Union and with relevant subregional organizations, to ensure ongoing coordination and dovetailing of joint activities.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): There is no doubt that, without peace there can be no

development. In many African countries facing conflict, development efforts — even when still possible — have inevitably been eroded. Notwithstanding the important progress that has been made in peace-building and development in recent years, thanks to the efforts of the African countries themselves and to the support of the international community, conflicts persist and continue to affect many countries and regions beset also by disease and poverty.

The comprehensive reports of the Secretary-General eloquently highlight the scope of the difficulties and the problems that impede Africa's development. The clarity with which they describe efforts by African countries and the support of the international community and the United Nations system facilitates understanding of the gravity of the situation in Africa and the continent's main concerns.

Joint consideration of the items entitled "The New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support" and the sub-item entitled "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", which in many cases are interdependent, seems appropriate because it makes it possible to deal with both of them in a coordinated and integrated manner. However, given the specific nature of each of those items, my delegation believes that separate reports on them should continue to be issued.

On the question of durable peace and sustainable development, my delegation welcomes the ongoing attention paid by the Secretary-General to the sensitive question of conflict resolution and the maintenance of peace in Africa, as well as his support for African initiatives in resolving conflicts.

The efforts made since June 2002 in the Central African Republic, in Angola and, recently, in Liberia, for which the Secretary-General has just appointed a Special Representative, are significant and should be intensified. The establishment by the Economic and Social Council of Ad Hoc Advisory Groups for Guinea-Bissau and Burundi is also commendable, as they are aimed at coordinating the support of the international community and of the United Nations system for the transition from the post-conflict phase to that of recovery and reconstruction in those countries, which are emerging from conflict.

It is clear that cooperation and coordination among the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflict and the competent mechanisms of the African Union should be further strengthened so that initiatives for peace and development in Africa can become part of a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated approach. The political will and determination of African countries to achieve lasting settlements of the many conflicts that continue to ravage the continent depend, however, on the existence of adequate African capacities. We believe that these are two basic conditions for the creation of such capacities.

First, the resources needed for these capacities must not be diverted from the development effort. Secondly, large-scale support and encouragement for African peace and security initiatives should not ultimately lead to the international community's abandoning conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa, or particularly to the disengagement of the United Nations and its Security Council, which, under the Charter, bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

A year ago the Assembly adopted two important resolutions on Africa: resolution 57/2, entitled "United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development", which welcomed NEPAD and confirmed that international support for the New Partnership was essential; and resolution 57/7, which terminated the United Nations New Agenda for Africa in the 1990s and made NEPAD a reference framework for support for Africa by the United Nations system and the international community. Twelve months later, we now have our first opportunity together to assess the progress made in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the international community's support for NEPAD. It is extremely encouraging to observe that the African countries are resolutely committed to attaining the goals that have been set and have taken promising steps in that direction.

The report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/58/254) — and we welcome its comprehensive approach and simplicity of format, which were intended to make it easier to follow up support for NEPAD — sets out in a precise manner the obstacles encountered on the ground. It is clear that the lack of financial resources and the persistence of conflicts and endemic diseases that continue to decimate the human resources

of the continent are major obstacles that weaken the capacity and development efforts of the African countries. In shouldering their responsibility, first and foremost to provide for their own development, the African countries have made enormous national sacrifices at the political, economic and social levels to meet all of the conditions to make this new African partnership a success.

We welcome the progress made in priority areas such as governance, peace and security, national coordination, agriculture, health, education, environment, tourism, infrastructure and industrialization. Certainly, more efforts need to be made to strengthen the resolve of African countries to move ahead with their implementation of NEPAD.

The recent establishment of new African Union institutions adapted to current conditions stems naturally from the common will and commitment, now irreversible, to use all the machinery that can help attain the goals of NEPAD, with a view to lifting the continent out of underdevelopment and providing better conditions for its active integration into the world economy.

We welcome the partnership established between NEPAD and the Group of Eight (G-8), as well as the commitments of the G-8 to support Africa's efforts. We also welcome the many support initiatives of certain developed countries for Africa. Whether multilateral or bilateral, such initiatives should be encouraged.

In his report, the Secretary-General rightly stresses the particular importance of the contribution of the international community, while noting that efforts still need to be made in the areas of official development assistance, providing relief for the serious external debt burden, liberalization of international trade and encouraging private investment flows towards Africa.

In his report on implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/58/323), the Secretary-General clearly notes that the success or failure of the Millennium Development Goals depends on whether the developed countries live up to their commitments in those areas. That shows how closely the fate of NEPAD remains tied to the establishment of an enabling international environment which will, to a large extent, determine the attainment of goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals, concerning the establishment of a global partnership for development and in particular, its benchmarks relating to debt, official development assistance and the establishment of an open multilateral financial and trading system. My delegation is convinced that an active, consistent response to these decisive questions of development financing requires a comprehensive and integrated approach.

The United Nations system must play a major role in helping to support Africa's efforts. Operational activities are of great importance here, but they must be carried out with strict universality, objectivity and neutrality and be free of any temptation to interfere in the internal affairs of recipient countries.

In conclusion, I wish to stress the importance of the creation of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa. The creation of that Office is an expression of the United Nations commitment to provide regular follow-up to international support for NEPAD. That Office is of crucial importance for Africa and for following up the implementation of the New Partnership, and it needs to be provided with sufficient human and financial resources to enable it to succeed.

Mr. Natama (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all, Mr. President, to pay tribute to you for the way in which you and the other members of the Bureau are directing the work of this session. My delegation assures you of its full cooperation as you carry out your tasks.

I wish also to thank the Secretariat for the relevance of the reports before us, their conciseness and exactitude makes them easy to use. My delegation fully endorses the statement made on behalf of the African Group. Nonetheless, we also wish to make a few general comments on the items before us today.

A few months ago, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) seemed to be at a crossroads, on the one hand because of the war in Iraq, and on the other hand because of the continuing doubts about the capacity of African leaders to apply the principles of good political and economic governance that they themselves espoused in the Durban Declaration of July 2001.

That apparent uncertainty was dispelled with the adoption of a more recent declaration on the implementation of NEPAD at the second ordinary session of the African Union Summit, held in Maputo from 10

to 12 July 2003. All of these initiatives taken by African heads of State are important milestones marking a genuine commitment to a new start for the continent, which is now being reflected in practical terms by the fact that some 15 countries have spontaneously and voluntarily joined the African Peer Review Mechanism.

I would like to stress here that for my country — whose Government on 20 March 2003 took the decisive step of joining the Mechanism — peer review is a vital development tool in view of its significant impact on the building of the institutional, political and economic capacities of our countries. Without doubt, the fact that the first reviews will very soon be carried out is incontestable proof of the resolve of African States to establish a sound environment which will promote transparent management.

Concerning ongoing progress, we should also mention the process of creating an African Peace and Security Council. The African continent, without doubt, needs to end the wars that continue to ravage it, in order to seriously plan for its development. The Council is therefore vital, and rapid ratification of the Protocol relating to its establishment will make it possible for leaders to prevent, control and resolve conflicts.

Moreover, I take this opportunity here to pay tribute to the remarkable work done by the Economic and Social Council concerning African countries emerging from conflict. As members know, at its most recent substantive session the Economic and Social Council extended the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau and established an Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi.

These new elements on the agenda of the Economic and Social Council have served to support the concept that there can be no development without peace. With this fresh impetus, the secretariat of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Commission of the African Union, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council should further strengthen their cooperation on issues of peace, security and development. At this stage, tangible progress has been made in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone, with further progress expected in Liberia and the Côte d'Ivoire.

My delegation concurs with the Secretary-General's report concerning the difficulties and constraints in implementing NEPAD, particularly the issue of weak institutional capacity for planning and executing development programmes at the regional and national levels, as well as the problem of inadequate resources. However, in the spirit of the New Partnership, the principle of collective responsibility of all countries of the continent should prevail in seeking resolutions to problems. The suggestion that African countries themselves might devote their own resources to funding NEPAD would be welcome and could more readily attract the support of development partners. As for mobilizing the international community, which has thus far been regarded as modest, it should be encouraged to keep pace with the efforts and determination of African leaders. Africa, moreover, is hoping for the support of the international community in the crucial area of access to markets of the North. In that spirit, it would be desirable for initiatives such as African Growth and Opportunity Act to be extended to all African countries, without ideological considerations, and for agricultural subsidies by Europe and North America to be granted in accordance with World Trade Organization rules.

The success of NEPAD requires a participatory approach to its implementation. Burkina Faso believes that every African State must initiate broad debate to make their population at all levels of society aware of this new initiative so that the people may take ownership of it. The political will that has been forcefully expressed by heads of State will remain wishful thinking if grass-roots communities are not deeply involved in the implementation of this programme, especially since the social environment is just as important as good governance, stability and many other factors affecting the decisions of various public and private international investors. That is why Burkina Faso has launched a broad public awareness campaign on NEPAD, through, among other things, the holding of public debates with civil society, universities and national and local decision makers.

Moreover, a subregional approach, as a strategic framework for the implementation of NEPAD mechanisms, has prompted my country to initiate and host over the past months subregional meetings on sectoral issues, such as on agriculture and livestock raising, in conjunction with the Food and Agricultural Organization, as well as on education, science and culture with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. In the same vein, Burkina Faso will be hosting a summit of African Union heads of State on employment and the fight against poverty in 2004.

As it enters its operational phase, NEPAD will need strengthened human capacities. Burkina Faso is preparing for this by establishing an instrument that is able to meet the new requirements, namely a political, economic and social policy analysis centre. Furthermore, Burkina Faso is now adopting its second national plan for good governance, which will incorporate the targets, standards and criteria of the African Peer Review Mechanism for the forthcoming review in the framework of that Mechanism, in September 2004. My country intends to continue to pursue its advocacy activities while stressing the implementation of development projects in accordance with the guidelines agreed in NEPAD, according to which we have adapted our national campaign against poverty.

I would like to conclude by commending the United Nations system for its invaluable contributions over the past decades to extricate Africa from underdevelopment. The follow-up to the implementation General Assembly resolution 57/7 once again grants the United Nations a leadership role in coordinating and harmonizing international activities for Africa.

Mr. Isakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The progressive development of Africa is being stalled by several factors. The destructive impact of illegal armed groups are eroding the very basis of the existence of sovereign States. They continually fuel the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, mercenary activities, the use of child soldiers, gross violations of human rights and the norms of humanitarian law, the illegal export of natural resources and transborder crime. Consequently, conflict that spills across borders takes on a subregional nature, destroys State structures and law and order and causes refugee flows. They also threaten the peace and stability of the entire continent. We can counter this only by acting together.

Russia supports the efforts undertaken by the United Nations to strengthen the peacekeeping capacities of Africa and establish effective cooperation in the field of peacekeeping. We note with satisfaction that the progress that has been achieved during the past year in the settlement of armed conflict in Africa. The successful United Nations peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia and other crisis zones show the intrinsic link between peace and stability and fully-fledged socio-economic recovery in conflict-torn countries.

The new kinds of partnership being forged between the United Nations and regional organizations is of particular significance in this context. Among the positive examples of such partnership are the Security Council-mandated European Union mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the deployment of the forces of the Economic Community of West African States in Liberia. The events over the past months in the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau attest to the seriousness of the problems that African countries are facing in the post-conflict period.

The entire experience of Africa's development shows that what will prevent destabilization is the strengthening of State institutions, the development of democracy, tackling ongoing economic problems, combating corruption, providing secure borders, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and mutually beneficial relations with neighbours.

Moreover, it is quite clear that the main responsibility for Africa's future falls to the Africans themselves. One important step forward was the recent adoption of the principle of good-neighbourly relations by southern African countries under the Secretary-General's auspices. We are convinced that such exemplary multilateral cooperation with the participation of the United Nations can be used in other parts of Africa. Russia will continue to do its part with the resources available to it to strengthen peacekeeping capacity of Africa.

The social and economic aspects of the New Partnership for Africa's Development are crucial for guiding Africa towards sustainable development. In that respect, Russia will focus its efforts on debt alleviation of African countries in the framework of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. Between 1998 and 2002, Russia wrote off $11.2 billion of the debt of African countries, including $3.4 billion in 2002. A decision was made that Russia would contribute an additional $10 million to the Initiative Trust Fund between 2003 and 2004. The States of the continent are being given wide trade preference. Current Russian legislation stipulates that traditional exports from the least developed countries, most of which are African, are exempt from customs import duties. These goods are not subject to quantitative import restrictions or to anti-dumping, countervailing or special protection measures. More than 80 per cent of Russia's imports from Africa receive preferential treatment.

With the assistance of Russian companies, several major investment projects are being carried out in Africa, including projects to develop mineral resources, energy and metallurgy. Russia provides tangible assistance to African countries in areas such as training and public health. Each year they are granted approximately 800 Russian State scholarships. Russian teachers and doctors are working in the continent. In the context of the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Russia is assisting African countries to help fight diverse infectious diseases.

Russia provides the African countries humanitarian assistance to deal with the effects of natural disasters. During 2002 and 2003, assistance was provided to Algeria, Ethiopia and Eritrea, and through the World Food Programme Russia has given emergency food aid to Angola. In 2003, Russia made a voluntary contribution to the budget of the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the direct funding of humanitarian operations in Africa. We intend to continue to participate actively in international efforts in support of the country's social economic development.

Mr. De La Sabliere (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the high level of attention being given to Africa by the Assembly. Our debate today, like the resolution we adopted last year, attests to the importance assumed by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) — an initiative of African countries — and the need to continue and to strengthen our partnership with Africa.

The Secretary-General's report describes clearly and fully the progress made and the steps still to be taken. We agree with his conclusions and recommendations. Their implementation must be a priority, and France will make its full contribution.

The Italian presidency of the European Union described earlier the actions of the Europeans in this regard. Our own commitment falls within that framework. We aim to work together with African countries, according to their defined principles, which are also ours, and in keeping with their priorities — peace and security, fighting poverty, hunger and disease, access to water and education and protection of natural resources. Those concur with the goals that the United Nations and the international community established at the Millennium Summit, the Monterrey Conference and the Johannesburg Summit. Indeed, we all know that the Millennium Development Goals apply particularly to Africa.

Attaining those Goals is still possible. To that end, we must apply all instruments available to us to support the efforts of African countries themselves — investment, trade, official development assistance, debt relief, innovative sources of financing, technology transfer and expertise. Each must be used to a greater extent and more effectively than we do now.

I will not review most of those points. Our Italian colleague has demonstrated the resolve of Europeans to make progress in that direction for the purpose of securing sustainable development for Africa. I will make a few additional remarks on some points to which France attaches special importance.

First, the work done since last year within NEPAD and by the African Union has been remarkable, as was demonstrated by the outcome of the Maputo Summit in July. I am thinking particularly of the Peer Review Mechanism, with 16 countries having already signed the memorandum. We welcome the establishment of the group of eminent persons and the commitment of the countries that have volunteered to serve on it. I am also thinking of the policies designed by NEPAD in important areas such as agriculture, health and the environment.

We are all aware that much remains to be done, but action has begun. Now we need to move to implementation. The subregional organizations can play a very valuable role in that regard.

My second point, the partnership between NEPAD and the Group of 8 (G-8), was further built upon in Evian, along the lines set by the Genoa and Kananaskis summits. The report adopted by the heads of State and Government spells out how the G-8 members will strive to respond to the ambitions of the African countries. I would also like to draw attention to G-8 support for establishing an early warning mechanism and for the creation of a pre-positioned African force, in keeping with the so-called Berlin Process adopted at Evian and Maputo. This is one of the most important achievements of the Partnership, as peace and security are essential to development and prosperity.

Ratification of the protocol establishing the African Union Peace and Security Council will mark a another positive step forward. The European Union, for its part, is ready to support African peacekeeping operations under United Nations auspices.

Thirdly, I wish to mention some of the priorities set by NEPAD that we strongly support, together with the European Union and the G-8. These priorities are both interdependent and critical to the success of the whole programme.

The first priority is to combat AIDS. That pandemic affects certain African countries to a tragic extent. The meetings on 22 September in New York demonstrated the strength of political mobilization within the international community. It is essential that that be translated into practical terms through greater effort. Following the Secretary-General, the President of the French Republic has appealed to all donors to increase their support to the Global Fund in order to raise $3 billion needed by the Fund as early as next year. Europe, for its part, has already committed itself to the Fund. At the same time, the agreement achieved concerning access to medicine is important. It is vital that the countries that need it take full advantage of it.

The second priority is access to water and sanitation. The goals set at the Millennium Summit and the Johannesburg Summit are crucial. Following the Kyoto Forum, the G-8 adopted a plan of action that aims particularly at supporting NEPAD efforts in that area. All possible sources of financing should now be mobilized. The World Bank is a part of that work. The European Union envisages the creation of a European water fund, whose arrangements are still under review. We hope that the United Nations will also play a full role in this area.

The third priority is to combat hunger. As President Lula noted, food security is a matter of global concern. More than 40 million people are likely to die of hunger in Africa. While we need to take immediate measures to cope with threats of humanitarian crises, long-term solutions are also necessary. NEPAD has logically made agricultural development one of its priorities. For its part, the G-8 has committed itself to working to reverse the decline in official development assistance to agriculture and to enhance the trading potential of the countries concerned. The Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Economic and Social Council in July expresses the same ideas. In that respect, too, implementation will be crucial.

The importance of infrastructure should not be underestimated. NEPAD and the subregional organizations represent a natural framework for discussing infrastructure. We are committed to encouraging investment in this area, including in the private sector.

My fourth and final point relates to trade. We deeply regret the failure of the Cancún meeting. Everybody loses in such circumstances. We are aware, however, that the primary victims are the most vulnerable countries. When all those involved are ready, and negotiations resume, heightened attention must be paid to the specific needs of African countries. France and the European Union, as the Italian presidency of the Union has noted, have made proposals in this regard relating to market access, export subsidies for agricultural products and the problem of commodity prices — an issue that you, Mr. President, have made one of your priorities. We hope that those ideas will be taken into account.

Support for NEPAD should involve the pooling of all of our efforts, and should be regarded as a long-term undertaking. That is why France has proposed extending and expanding the partnership with the Group of Eight to other partners and international organizations that are involved. In this regard, we will be hosting, in Paris, the first meeting of a new forum for partnership with Africa, whose mission will be to monitor and support the progress made by Africans on all issues. The Secretary-General will, of course, be represented in that forum.

The United Nations plays a key role in support of NEPAD through its various agencies, which should lend greater support to existing policies, with a view to mobilizing the international community and ensuring that its activities are coherent and properly organized in terms of monitoring and evaluation of results. In this regard, we welcome the action taken by the Secretary-General and his Special Adviser.

Africa and NEPAD must remain at the heart of the General Assembly's agenda as an issue of primary importance. France, working within the European Union, will lend its full support to a resolution that reflects the ambition that inspired us last year, taking note of the changes that have taken place and charting the course to follow next year.

As the President of the Republic has noted, confidence in Africa has brought us together. We are committed to breaking the vicious circle of powerlessness and lack of mobilization. Our duty here in the General Assembly is to ensure that that commitment is fulfilled.

Mr. Negroponte (United States of America): I am pleased to speak today in affirmation of what President Bush has called the growing strategic relationship between the United States and the African continent. Africa matters to the United States Government because it matters to the American people. Our ties have taught us unforgettable lessons of human suffering and human potential, and they have given us unshakeable confidence in the human spirit and in our common future.

As President Bush said in Abuja, Nigeria, last July, working together, we can help make this a decade of rising prosperity and expanding peace across Africa. That goal is ambitious, but the way forward is clear and well marked on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

The United States has strongly supported the objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) since its inception. NEPAD is a dramatic commitment by African leaders to end conflict and hasten progress by taking concrete action to promote peace and stability, to consolidate democracy and to provide sound economic management and people-centred development. That is as it should be: Africa's future mapped out by Africans on behalf of Africans.

We commend African leaders for their vision in launching NEPAD. In particular, we wish to recognize President Mbeki, President Wade and President Obasanjo for their pivotal role in developing and guiding the implementation of NEPAD. We are encouraged by recent progress in the implementation of what we hope will be a rigorous and transparent African Peer Review Mechanism, overseen by the Panel of Eminent Persons.

These endeavours have been reinforced by the role African leaders and regional organizations, such as the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and the African Union peacekeeping mission in Burundi, are playing in preventing and resolving conflict in Africa.

Africa's leadership reversed a coup d'état in Sao Tome and Principe in July; played a pivotal role in defusing the conflict in Liberia; and provided critical peacekeeping functions in Côte d'Ivoire. It is making progress in containing tensions in Burundi and helping to address the complex, troubling situation in Zimbabwe. It has played a key role in peace negotiations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and it is guiding African-led mediation efforts in Sudan that are bearing fruit.

The United States has a deep and continuing commitment to these initiatives in pursuit of peace and security, which are so essential to the continent's hopes for strong and sustainable economic growth and development. Thus we are training peacekeepers, holding military education seminars at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies and working with African mediators and subregional organizations to enhance their conflict-resolution capabilities.

At the same time, we are supporting the efforts of Africa's leaders to stop war and terror on the continent and working with those same leaders to expand trade, opportunity and enterprise for the African people.

America is already the world's largest investor in Africa's economies, but enormous opportunities remain open to us both. Under the historic African Growth and Opportunity Act, the United states is opening its dynamic markets to thousands of products from Africa. This reflects a shared United States-NEPAD emphasis on the vital role of trade in economic growth and development, bringing millions of dollars in new investments to Africa's shores, along with thousands of new jobs for African workers.

These new trade and investment linkages benefit not only Africa's trade with the United States but also economic ties within Africa itself and between Africa and the rest of the world. The fact is that African countries have suffered too long from their relative isolation from the global economy.

We must therefore find ways to overcome the failure of the Cancún Ministerial Meeting to forge a consensus on how to further open the world's markets and take advantage of the promise of market-led, poverty-reducing growth. Hundreds of billions of dollars per year in increased income — and the lives that would be improved by that income — are at stake. Ambitious global trade liberalization offers as much promise to Africa as to any other region in the world, perhaps more.

Complementing United States trade policies, the President's Millennium Challenge Account, which is now before the Congress, will make substantially increased resources available to help developing countries that demonstrate, not promise, a strong commitment to liberty and prosperity for all their people.

The Millennium Challenge Account draws on one of the essential lessons of development: countries prosper when their Governments function justly, effectively and transparently. This requires the rule of law, independent judiciaries and respect for the rights of citizens, including the right to choose their own representatives.

Of course, these elements are integral to Africa's ability to achieve the vision of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). As President Bush stated earlier this year in South Africa, "NEPAD ... can help extend democracy and free markets and transparency across the continent ...".

Indeed, to the extent NEPAD achieves the goals of good governance, our own commitments to African peace, security, trade and economic development will have greater impact. The task now is for African Governments to translate NEPAD's aspirations into specific actions at the national level by investing in their people, implementing responsible economic policies that foster trade and investment and by being open and accountable in their budget, procurement and tax systems.

Needless to say, we do recognize that even as many African nations accept the responsibility of good government, they also confront extreme challenges in the areas of health, education, and humanitarian relief.

The challenge of implementing ambitious reforms while human survival is in doubt can be overwhelming. As Africa's true partner and friend, our commitment to Africa therefore includes the $15 billion Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and continued United States leadership in the global effort to fight HIV/AIDS; the African Education Initiative, contributing over $200 million in new money, combined with existing programmes, to total $600 million over the next five years for basic education in Africa; and $850 million in emergency assistance to help Africa address its food crises.

Taken all together, we believe that the elements of the United States Government's policy towards Africa reinforces NEPAD's affirmation of an African destiny shaped by the wise stewardship of democratically elected African Governments. Our overarching goal, then, is to fulfil the President's vision of a growing strategic relationship between the continent of Africa and the United States of America. The shared history, friendship and common values that bind us together demand nothing less.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for the two comprehensive reports that are under consideration today — one on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/58/254) and another on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/58/352). We believe that both these reports are extremely important and while they might address similar challenges, they are nevertheless distinct. NEPAD is a programme of the African Union, an African-grown and owned socio-economic plan for the continent, with a number of very distinct priorities and programmes.

The report concerning the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa addresses among other things, peacekeeping, peacemaking, refugees and the proliferation of small arms, issues that are dealt with by other institutions of the African Union.

Over a year ago, during a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on NEPAD, our discussions focused mostly on what NEPAD hopes to achieve and how we expected it to work. Today, we are glad to report that significant progress has been made in the implementation of NEPAD.

NEPAD has completed many continent-wide programmes and strategies. These include comprehensive plans for African agricultural development, health programmes and a multi-sectoral AIDS strategy, a NEPAD education programme, a tourism strategy, and programmes for industrialization and infrastructure development. The Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee has proven to be a useful mechanism for the overall, hands-on overseeing of the implementation of NEPAD.

More important, Africa has moved beyond the completion of strategies and programmes to implementation. At the subregional level, there have been a number of projects started, including the electricity link between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia, the oil pipeline that runs through a number of West African Countries, the New Rice for Africa initiative, the printing of school textbooks, school feeding programmes and many more.

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) which is supposed to help promote good governance on the African continent, has now been established. While this is quite a novel and courageous process to be

undertaken by any group of countries, Africa is convinced of the contribution that the APRM could make to promote good governance on our continent. It is therefore very encouraging that more than 16 countries have so far acceded to the Peer Review Mechanism and many more are considering becoming part of the Mechanism.

South Africa appreciates the focus placed on the APRM in the Secretary-General's report and the effort made to describe the structures and procedures involved in it. The APRM is rightly described as a means of monitoring progress towards good economic and political governance through peer learning and peer-sharing.

But contrary to the report of the Secretary-General, the APRM was not meant to be a "means of attracting support from development partners". (*A/58/254, para. 8*) Rather, the APRM was Africa's own effort for seeking good governance for Africa itself and not as a means to appeal to the international community.

We have also seen progress in the United Nations with the establishment of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. That Office is already making quite a difference and has had numerous outputs, such as contributing to the reports before us today. We hope it will be provided with the necessary resources to enable it to fulfil its important mandate within the United Nations. In this regard, we look forward to the unveiling and implementation of the advocacy strategy of the Office of the Special Adviser.

We are further encouraged by the growing efforts of the United Nations system to mainstream NEPAD into its priorities and programmes. The close cooperation between the NEPAD secretariat and African regional and subregional organizations, as well as individual Governments within the United Nations system, is, indeed, very heartening. We hope to see this trend expand even further in future.

I am pleased that the report does not neglect to highlight the challenges and constraints still faced by many African countries. In a true spirit of partnership, these cannot be addressed through the efforts of the African countries alone. They need the support of the international community. Such challenges and constraints are particularly clear in the areas of resource mobilization.

Regarding external debt, South Africa appreciates the debt relief provided by a number of both developed and developing country bilateral creditors. The efforts to fully finance the Trust Fund financing the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt (HIPC) Initiative are also valuable. The increase in the number of African countries reaching their decision and completion points is also appreciated. In its current form, however, the HIPC Initiative seems not to be able to deliver the relief that everyone expected of it when it was enhanced some four years ago. One of the results is that some heavily indebted poor countries still spend more on servicing their debt than on health and education.

We are looking forward to the international conference planned for 2004, at which we must look beyond HIPC and come up with new proposals for finding a solution to Africa's untenable debt burden. Consideration will have to be given to the proposals contained in the Monterrey Consensus and most recent General Assembly resolution on external debt with regard to the link between debt relief and a country's ability to generate the necessary resources to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

South Africa appreciates the increase in recent years in the flow of official development assistance to Africa, although it has not yet reached the 1990 level. In view of the limited supply of official development assistance, my delegation fully supports the efforts to increase aid effectiveness. Donor countries also place particular emphasis on the need to improve the effectiveness of official development assistance. That stance, however, contrasts sharply with the reluctance by some donor countries to untie certain types of aid to certain countries. The main consideration should be to ensure the maximum impact and benefit to be derived by the recipient country from the aid, not the benefits it could provide to other constituencies and interests. Otherwise the concept of aid efficiency would become a mere slogan which is applied selectively.

A very tragic picture was painted by the failure of Cancún to deliver a result that would have favoured the African and other developing countries. It almost made a mockery of the vows by all and sundry to make the Doha Round a development round, as well as earlier undertakings to provide increased market access to products from Africa. It was almost absurd — if not tragic — to see the four African least developed cotton-producing countries pitted against the giants of world trade, given that the cotton subsidies alone surpass the gross domestic product of those four African countries combined. Despite the most persuasive arguments of

the African least developed countries that they be given an equal chance to compete fairly, those poor countries were asked to find alternative livelihoods. If that is not an indictment of the current state of world trade, it is difficult to imagine what could be.

It is sad to see how the potential of the Cancún meeting to provide African and other developing countries with an opportunity to work their way out of abject poverty was squandered. It almost suggests that some want developing countries to remain forever dependent on the goodwill of donor Governments.

In the area of South-South cooperation, there has been a growing trend towards economic and technical cooperation between Africa and the other developing regions of Asia and Latin America. This has been given added impetus by the Asian-African Subregional Organizations Conference, which was co-hosted by South Africa and Indonesia in Bandung earlier this year. The second Africa-China Forum will take place in December this year, as will the Ministerial Conference on South-South Cooperation, in Marrakech, Morocco. Even more promising was the announcement during the general debate by India, Brazil and South Africa of an initiative to address issues of hunger and poverty. This marks the beginning of an initiative by developing countries to address issues that are urgent for the survival and prosperity of developing countries themselves.

South Africa believes that certain actions could be taken to make NEPAD more effective. These include the need to expand national focal points in order to ensure a coordinated and integrated implementation of NEPAD priorities at the national level. It will also be important to further popularize NEPAD at the national and continental levels so as to ensure buy-in by the general public. A clear and comprehensive communication strategy will be needed. The non-governmental and community-based organizations can play an important role in this regard. We welcomed the meeting organized by the African Union to discuss NEPAD with stakeholders in civil society in Africa. As of today, there is complete support for NEPAD in civil society and the private sector, and this is resulting in an added advantage on the part of many countries, which are deepening their commitment to NEPAD values and practices.

I would like to make some comments on issues specifically raised in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. In the field of peace and security, Africans are taking the initiative to address African problems. South Africa welcomes the extensive involvement of the United Nations in assisting African countries to resolve and manage conflicts. As the report points out, coordination between the United Nations and the African Union is particularly pertinent to post-conflict peace-building. Policies must be complementary and aim at achieving durable peace. In this regard, we were particularly pleased to hear that the Secretary-General consults regularly with the Bretton Woods institutions with a view to ensuring peace-friendly structural adjustment policies in Africa and elsewhere.

South Africa's own commitment to the promotion of an integrated and coordinated approach to post-conflict reconstruction is best demonstrated by our strong support for the creation and work of the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea-Bissau and on Burundi. The work of those two Groups has already made quite a contribution to closer cooperation between different organs and structures within the United Nations system, particularly the closer cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. The report itself refers to the creation of the United Nations Development Programme Emergency Economic Management Fund for Guinea-Bissau, as proposed by the Ad Hoc Group on Guinea-Bissau.

On the peacekeeping front, a number of efforts have been made over the past few years aimed at building Africa's capacity to resolve and manage conflict. The contributions of the European Union, as well as of the Group of Eight industrialized countries, deserve special mention. The complexity of conflict management also highlights the importance of close coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations. Assistance by the United Nations in drafting a ceasefire agreement for Burundi serves as a good example of constructive cooperation. The lessons learned and best practices emanating from the long and wide experience of the United Nations in areas such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and ceasefire implementation should certainly be shared with regional groups involved in peacemaking efforts.

We welcome further the emphasis placed on social development in the report. There can be no doubt about the important link between the promotion of peace and the promotion of social development. The

importance of an integrated approach to development was also highlighted during the recent World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, which also underscored the importance of coordination within the United Nations system in its interaction with Africa.

In this regard, South Africa welcomes the recent adoption by the Commission for Social Development of a resolution on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The resolution highlights the need to strengthen, in a spirit of partnership, international, regional and subregional cooperation for social development and implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly.

The Commission for Social Development is also called upon to give prominence to the social dimensions of NEPAD in its future priority themes. South Africa is looking forward to the adoption by the General Assembly during its current session of the report of the forty-first session of the Commission for Social Development.

As far as the future of the report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa is concerned, South Africa will wish to see the continuation of the report. While it may be true that many of the issues dealt with in that report can be found elsewhere, it is of great importance to have the information collected in one report that focuses on all the issues as they particularly relate to Africa.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): Mr. President, I associate the United Kingdom fully with the statement made by the presidency of the European Union. I also join others in thanking you, Sir, for this debate. The issues are central to the work of the United Nations and our common agenda of poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Africa's current position is dramatic. If its situation does not improve, 23 countries will fail to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Democracy is gradually taking hold in the continent, but the number of poor people in the region continues to increase. Maternal and child mortality is increasing: a woman has a 1 in 13 chance of dying in pregnancy or childbirth and 75 per cent of the world's HIV/AIDS sufferers are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Africa's problems are complex and interconnected. Let me highlight four: first, conflict in key countries and regions. In January 2000 more than half of all African countries were affected by conflict, although I'm glad to say there are now promising signs of improvement. Secondly, governance — in some African countries the State has effectively failed. Thirdly, terms of trade have deteriorated and commodity prices have fallen. The result has been low investment and economic growth, insufficient jobs created for the poor and too few resources for health and education. Fourthly, HIV/AIDS has caused huge damage right across the continent.

But the news is not all bad. NEPAD is the most promising African-led development initiative in a generation. It aims to tackle HIV/AIDS, reduce poverty and sustain long-term economic growth. It is backed by a commitment to improve governance, build peacekeeping capacity and create the right environment for investment. The African Peer Review Mechanism, to begin in Ghana this year, is an important tool that we strongly support.

African countries know and have recognized that the primary responsibility rests with them. The international response to Africa's challenges must be implemented in partnership with those African Governments, working within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

The G-8 responded two years ago by agreeing to a series of commitments under the G-8 Africa Action Plan. In June this year, G-8 countries reported the progress. We now look forward to the Africa partners forum meeting next month, under French chairmanship, to consider how further progress can be made.

Let me set out five areas which the United Kingdom considers require urgent further international effort. First, more and better development assistance. That is why the United Kingdom development assistance to Africa will rise to over £1 billion by 2006. But we must all increase the financing available for development. The United Kingdom is exploring with partners the best means of achieving this, for example, Gordon Brown's proposal for a new international finance facility. This aims to double resources for official development assistance up to 2015 by tapping into new private sources. We welcome the interest in this from the Secretary-General, other Member States, and the Bretton Woods institutions.

Secondly, we need to tackle trade. The current system does not work for the least developed countries. Africa's share of world trade is now less than 1 per cent. Trade rules must be improved to benefit the world's poor. The failure of the World Trade Organization (WTO) talks in Cancún is most damaging to the world's poorest countries. Africa stands to get a better deal through multilateral negotiations in the WTO than through a multitude of regional and bilateral agreements. That is why the United Kingdom is determined to do all it can to get the Doha Development Agenda round back on track. We are absolutely committed to progress in the negotiations and progress multilaterally on those areas most critical to African countries — agricultural market access, special and differential treatment provisions for poorer countries, and reductions in trade-distorting subsidies.

Thirdly, we must support African efforts to resolve armed conflicts. We should pay tribute to what is being achieved, for example, the substantial efforts by the Economic Community of West African States in West Africa.

African countries and regional and subregional organizations deserve international support so that they can engage more effectively to prevent and resolve violent conflicts and undertake peace support operations. A plan for training and operational support has been agreed between the G-8 and the African countries. The United Nations will be closely involved in its implementation and we must support African efforts to eliminate the flow of illicit weapons on the continent. The United Kingdom has pledged over £20 million to combat the proliferation of small arms, including regional programmes in East Africa, the Great Lakes region and Southern Africa. It remains the case that small arms kill more people in Africa as a whole, than anything other than disease.

Fourthly, we must do more to fight one of Africa's biggest challenges, HIV/AIDS. Twenty-nine million people across Africa are living with that scourge. The World Bank has warned that several African economies are facing collapse and family incomes are being decimated because of HIV/AIDS. The United Kingdom is proud to be the second largest donor of HIV/AIDS assistance and in 2002-2003 we invested over £270 million worldwide, the dollar equivalent being in excess of $420 million. This will enable all Africans who need it to have access to effective HIV/AIDS treatment. That goal is an international priority.

Fifthly, we must work to help strengthen governance in African States. Effective institutions, representative democracy and accountable government are essential conditions for private sector investment, growth and poverty reduction. The United Kingdom supports stronger capacity-building programmes for this.

Furthering the rule of law should be a common goal for all Members of the United Nations. The rule of law makes democracy more likely and that, in turn, makes conflict less probable.

Let me conclude by saying that the Secretary-General has rightly signalled the importance of a high-level review in this Assembly in 2005 of the progress being made on the Millennium Declaration. I hope that the United Kingdom will be able then, as President of the G-8 and of the European Union, which falls to us in 2005, to report substantial progress on the commitments we have all made. But specifically, it is vital that all of us do more to support NEPAD and to support Africans in their effort to lift Africa out of poverty. That is a vital task for the United Nations system and for all its Member States. This, Sir, must be our shared endeavour.

Mr. Mizukami (Japan): The Government of Japan has been promoting the principles of Africa's ownership and international partnership for African development through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process since 1993. Therefore Japan has been sincerely respecting and supporting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the clear and concrete demonstration of Africa's ownership, from the time of its launching. Two weeks ago, Japan renewed its commitment to supporting NEPAD by hosting the third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III), together with 89 countries and 47 organizations that participated in the Conference.

Japan welcomes the progress made in the implementation of NEPAD. We are pleased that the African Peer Review Mechanism has been established and that so far 16 countries have acceded to it. Sharing good practices and development experiences through peer reviews is instrumental in strengthening Africa's ownership and contributing to Africa's development through NEPAD. These factors are indispensable for African development. We hope that the Peer Review

Mechanism will be promoted further and will be successful.

We are also pleased to note the progress made in areas such as agriculture, health, infrastructure and investment within the framework of NEPAD. However, we are concerned that capacity-building in Africa continues to be a serious challenge, coupled with the brain drain. We believe that education is the bedrock for development and human resources are the key to nation-building. We strongly hope that both African countries and international donors will invest more in the development of the skills and abilities of people in Africa. Japan believes that Asia-Africa cooperation, a principal feature of the TICAD process, can contribute a lot to capacity-building in Africa.

Prime Minister Koizumi announced at TICAD III the three pillars that comprise Japan's initiative for assistance to the implementation of NEPAD.

With regard to the first pillar, "human-centred development", human resource development is always Japan's top priority in development assistance. In addition, on the occasion of TICAD III, the Prime Minister announced that over the next five years Japan aims to extend grant-in-aid assistance to Africa totalling $1 billion in areas such as health and medical care, including measures against HIV/AIDS, as well as education, water and food.

The second pillar is "poverty reduction through economic growth". Without economic growth, poverty cannot be reduced sustainably. In particular, Japan has been placing strong emphasis on cooperation to improve agricultural productivity because agriculture is the backbone of African economies. The establishment of the New Rice for Africa initiative is among the successful examples of Japan's efforts.

Infrastructure is also essential for economic development. Japan places emphasis on such areas as transportation, communication, energy, and water. In the area of trade and investment, Japan will promote investment in Africa by Japanese companies through measures such as overseas investment loans, with a target of approximately $300 million in loans over five years.

The third pillar is "consolidation of peace". While the progress that has been made in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone, for example, is encouraging, the prevalence of unresolved conflicts and residual causes of conflict in Africa is of grave concern to all of us. We welcome in this connection the initiative taken by regional and subregional organizations, including the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, to address the conflicts in these countries. Africa's own will and determination, which were crystallized by NEPAD, are indeed the key to tackling conflicts in Africa in the future.

My Government believes at the same time that emergency measures alone taken vis-à-vis these conflicts will not make for lasting peace in Africa but must be accompanied by the post-conflict peace process, domestic security, and humanitarian and reconstruction assistance — three elements which are indispensable to the consolidation of peace. We in the international community must therefore encourage and support the efforts of African countries in these areas. The Government of Japan, for its part, has contributed to such efforts in various fields, and we will continue to actively support the activities of African regional and subregional organizations in the areas of conflict prevention, management and resolution.

Ambassador Haraguchi became one of the members of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi, at the request of Ambassador Nteturuye of Burundi. We are pleased to be able to participate in the Advisory Group and would like to work with other members of the Group in order to prepare recommendations for a long-term programme of support for Burundi. It also gives my Government a good opportunity to accumulate knowledge of and experience in the post-conflict development of African countries.

Japan wishes to engage in further dialogue with its African partners in order to address the question of how the people of Africa can free themselves from threats against their lives and human dignity, such as those posed by poverty, conflict and infectious disease. Japan, in other words, would like to contribute to Africa's quest for human security and its desire to realize a society in which people can live with hope in their hearts instead of despair.

Mr. Kazemi Kamyab (Islamic Republic of Iran): It is indeed very opportune for the General Assembly to consider how to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The reality of the situation faced by many millions of people in Africa only calls for a real, serious and comprehensive

approach, as well as a policy and action on a scale, with, and of a magnitude, commensurate with the situation itself. Let me seize this opportunity to reiterate my country's full solidarity with African countries, all of which without fail belong to the developing family. My country currently has an active diplomatic presence in most African countries, and they, in turn, have strengthened their diplomatic presence in Tehran.

With determination and cooperation, we have been able to contribute to a large number of projects and reconstruction plans in many African countries. The cordial and close cooperation of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the countries of the continent is on the rise, both in the bilateral field and on the international scene. Nonetheless, and perhaps because of often time-consuming bottlenecks and the lack of necessary infrastructure, economic ties have not been progressing on an equal footing with political relations. Of course, with determination and mutual cooperation, we have been able to contribute to many projects and reconstruction plans in many African countries.

Building infrastructure, constructing hospitals and health clinics and cooperation in the academic and scientific fields are but some of very general topics under which we have contributed to the development of the poorer areas of the continent. Given the vulnerability of the continent to many natural disasters, my country has provided financial and humanitarian assistance that almost always includes grants. Furthermore, in order to promote and facilitate economic and commercial relations, my Government has allocated a line of credit of $200 million for Africa. The credit ceiling shall be decided on the basis of mutual banking agreements.

The African renaissance, the rebirth we have all been talking about in recent years, can only be initiated and undertaken in all earnestness by Africans themselves and by African countries individually and collectively. NEPAD has embodied all of those elements. There is, of course, a role for others in the international community, including the United Nations. As far as the United Nations system is concerned, it should undertake to integrate all its various plans, programmes and initiatives into a comprehensive policy framework, comprising all political, economic and social components and having clear and well-defined roles and mandates for the relevant executing agencies and departments. Yes, there is a way forward for Africa. Let us all start moving down that road.

Mr. Talbot (Guyana): As we have done on many occasions in times past, Guyana is pleased once again to stand in solidarity with Africa, a continent with which we share not only lasting ties of history and culture but also common aspirations for durable peace and sustainable development for our peoples. My delegation applauds the initiative of African leaders to fashion a new partnership for development on the continent within a framework of democratic governance.

Today, as we review the progress made in the implementation of, and international support for, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), our task is greatly facilitated by the Secretary-General's reports contained in documents A/58/254 and A/58/352. The reports provide an enlightening survey of the progress made, as well as the challenges and constraints encountered. My delegation wishes to place on record its gratitude to the Secretary-General for his reports, as well as its appreciation for his efforts, and those of the entire United Nations system, in support of NEPAD.

Guyana views the New Partnership as a positive agenda for action, not only by and among African countries themselves as the primary actors, but also as one to be embraced by the entire international community. We are heartened by the commitment that the countries of Africa have demonstrated to integrating the priorities of NEPAD into their national policies and development planning frameworks. Guyana holds the view that ownership and leadership of the NEPAD process by Africans is indispensable to the achievement of the objectives of the New Partnership. In that context, my delegation welcomes the establishment of the African Peer Review Mechanism and the increasing accession of countries to the Mechanism.

Also to be welcomed and supported are the efforts of the African Union to consolidate democracy on the continent and strengthen regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, resolution and management. The hopeful results in Liberia, Burundi and Sao Tome and Principe are testimonies to both the leadership shown by Africa in addressing problems within its domain and to the growing partnership between regional organizations on the continent and the United Nations. We welcome that development.

We look forward to the entry into force of the protocol to establish the Pan-African Parliament to ensure the effective and full participation of African peoples in the development and integration of the

continent, as well as the Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. Efforts being made to reorient the activities of regional communities to reflect the priorities of NEPAD can contribute in a meaningful way to the operationalization of those priorities throughout the continent as a whole.

Notwithstanding the positive developments to which I have referred, Africa continues to face formidable challenges in its pursuit of peace and development. The Secretary-General has drawn attention to several of those challenges as they pertain to sectors such as agriculture and food security, health — in particular the crisis caused by HIV/AIDS — and education. No less daunting are the challenges posed by conflict and instability. Those challenges need to be seriously addressed if the continent is to have any chance of attaining the objectives of the New Partnership.

We also note that the implementation of NEPAD is constrained by a number of shortcomings, not least in the implementation machinery itself. In addition, the Secretary-General also highlights weak institutional capacity at the national and regional levels, insufficient popularizing of NEPAD at the country level and funding inadequacies. In our view, those represent opportunities for further cooperation and support from the international community.

While these challenges and constraints can be overcome, it is clear that doing so will require renewed efforts by the international community to honour its commitments to NEPAD. Concrete actions with respect to the provision of official development assistance, debt relief for Africa, market access for African products, redressing the deterioration of terms of trade for commodity producers and assistance in enabling the continent to attract foreign direct investment remain essential in that regard, with special responsibility devolving on developed country partners. My delegation is appreciative of the positive developments referred to by the Secretary-General on that front, and we call for intensified efforts in support of NEPAD. Equally important is for such efforts to assure a degree of sustainability in the gains achieved wherever possible.

My delegation is also of the view that South-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation initiatives, forms an integral and complementary part of the international response to NEPAD. In that regard, we note with appreciation the Secretary-General's acknowledgement of the contribution made by countries of the Latin America and the Caribbean region, among others, in the area of capacity building. At the level of the Caribbean Community, a number of cooperation initiatives have been undertaken with countries and institutions in Africa, including at the level of our respective secretariats. We look forward to continued cooperation in that regard, including the strengthening of our relationship with the continent in the context of the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific States. My own country, Guyana, is in the process of reviewing that relationship with a view to strengthening cooperation arrangements with several African countries.

I wish to conclude by renewing my delegation's commitment to lending every possible support that our limited resources will permit to the cause of Africa's renaissance.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): The delegation of Angola would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report contained in document A/58/254, entitled "The New Partnership for Africa's Development: first consolidated report on progress in implementation and international support". It is our view that that report provides useful insight into the progress of implementation with regard to the relevant agenda item.

Resolution 57/2, which was adopted at the previous session, welcomed the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as an African initiative that would be supported by the international community at large. The subsequent steps taken by the United Nations, and particularly the adoption of resolution 57/7, on 4 November 2002, gave special momentum to that process. It is that process and impulse that African countries had been expecting for a considerable time.

Despite providing us with important information on the actions taken thus far, the report nevertheless clearly recognizes that de facto results are far from being achieved.

Angola recognizes and commends the relentless work that the United Nations has undertaken with regard to the implementation of NEPAD. We welcome the establishment of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, which is currently chaired by our good friend and friend of my country, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari. We hope that the Office will be well provided with

adequate financial and human resources in order to carry out its mandate promptly and efficiently.

We also commend other United Nations agencies for their collaboration and support for activities that prioritize the implementation of NEPAD. We would especially like to thank the United Nations Development Programme for supporting NEPAD's secretariat in the elaboration of its five-year programme of work. The involvement of the Economic Commission for Africa in fine-tuning the African Peer Review Mechanism also constitutes an important step in the establishment of an institutional framework for mutual accountability and policy coherence in Africa. In the view of our delegation, the cluster approach to deal with that matter constitutes an excellent mechanism to keep the coordination of agencies' efforts alive in their treatment of NEPAD.

In the chapter entitled "Challenges and constraints", the report sheds some light on the difficulties that African countries will face in order to meet the minimum goals set forth in the Millennium Declaration. The report states plainly that

> "Total official development assistance to Africa is modest in comparison with the huge agricultural subsidies paid to farmers in the developed countries. Furthermore, the subsidies depress commodities prices, hindering Africa's ability to increase exports and escape from poverty and dependence on aid." (*A/58/254, para. 36*)

That is an old and well-known problem that the international community, and developed countries in particular, need to address.

Angola is working on a new poverty-reduction strategy paper aimed at improving the macro-economic framework and structural and social policies to foster growth and reduce poverty. The Ministry of Planning in my country is the focal point for matters regarding the implementation of NEPAD at the national level. The Ministry is sparing no efforts in its commitment to honour its responsibilities when it comes to implementation. Angola stands ready to continue its participation in regional and subregional programmes — such as Project Link — that will enhance the capacity of African countries to better respond to the challenges facing NEPAD. We support the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General, and we will work closely with all partners in order to bring complete success to NEPAD.

Africa is known as a continent of vast beauty, deep history and rich culture. Africa is, however, a land that continues to struggle with famine, poverty, debt, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria and tuberculosis — tragedies that have claimed the lives of millions of people. Armed conflicts constitute the other major cause of death in our continent. We are therefore deeply committed to finding adequate solutions to existing conflicts. We are particularly committed to creating the conditions necessary to avert the situation that Mr. Leonardo Santos Simão, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique — which currently chairs the African Union — referred to when he said that

> "there are no new conflicts on our continent, and even those that now exist are a combination of either old conflicts that have not been resolved properly or seemingly new ones that can be traced back to the old ones." (*supra*)

The recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report provide a clear assessment of the problems and constraints that the majority of the countries of Africa are still facing five years after the publication of the Secretary-General's first assessment on the causes of conflict in Africa. We would especially like to refer to recommendation 57 of the implementation matrix, which demands more effective harmonization of bilateral and international initiatives.

The Secretary-General's report on this matter also points out the need for a more refined reporting mechanism. Angola is of the view that the provision contained in resolution 57/296 — which pertains to the inclusion of a sub-item entitled "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" under a single agenda on the development of Africa, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support", beginning at the fifty-eighth session — constitutes the best solution and should be welcomed. But we need to do much more than just reporting. Effective and coordinated action by the international community is needed. NEPAD offers us a sound opportunity to act together.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Barely a year ago, we held a special high-level session of the General Assembly on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). On that occasion, the international community expressed its full support for that initiative aimed at achieving

Africa's sustainable development. Nevertheless, that much-heralded support has in fact been scarce, and it has not achieved tangible results.

The situation in Africa is increasingly critical. Half of African's population lives in extreme poverty, and one third suffers from starvation. One out of six children dies before the age of five, and 3.6 million children are born underweight. The enrolment rate for elementary education is at 57 per cent, and only one out of every 3 children finishes primary school. Life expectancy at birth in sub-Saharan Africa is barely 48 years of age. Out of the 42 million people infected with HIV/AIDS, 70 per cent live in sub-Saharan Africa and have no access to the medicines and treatments needed to fight the virus, avoid other diseases and ease pain. Age-old diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and other equally deadly ailments have not been overcome. Only 48 per cent of the population has access to drinking water. Of Africa's population over the age of 15, 37.6 per cent are illiterate. Millions of people do not have access to electricity, let alone to a telephone line. There are only 15 telephone lines per 1,000 people in Africa, whereas in industrialized countries, which account for 15 per cent of the world's population, there are 592 telephone lines for every 1,000 inhabitants.

Current international economic relations, which are characterized by the inequalities imposed by the neo-liberal globalization process, leave Africa at a total disadvantage. How can it be said that the globalization process is inclusive and offers opportunities and benefits for all when Africa, which comprises 18.5 per cent of the world's population and has the largest natural resource reserves in the world, accounts for only 1 per cent of gross domestic product and 2 per cent of the world's trade? Is it a coincidence that 34 of the 49 least developed countries are in Africa? Is it a coincidence that 34 out of the 42 heavily indebted poor countries are in Africa? It is obvious that the current unjust and unsustainable international order continues to plunder Africa as a basic source of wealth without bringing it economic development. Africa continues to be a net exporter of capital that exports wealth in excess of the aid and financing it receives.

Moreover, due to those reasons and because of the consequences of colonial partition, there are today more armed conflicts in Africa than in any other continent. That poses a significant challenge to meeting the Millennium Development Goals, as it has devastating effects on the economic and social development of the region. Africa's wisdom deserves respect. Africa does not need more advice or recipes to solve its conflicts; it needs financial resources. Despite what is said in debates and affirmed in numerous resolutions, emphasis continues to be on reacting to conflicts in Africa instead of on preventing them and eliminating their causes.

Various initiatives and proposals related to Africa continue to proliferate at the United Nations, but there is still a lack of political will and altruism on the part of former colonial Powers, as well as a comprehensive approach to solve problems related to peace, security and development on the continent. Neither is there a mechanism at the United Nations that makes it possible to periodically and efficiently monitor the fulfilment of what is agreed.

Africa cannot continue to wait. International cooperation is inescapable, and it is urgently needed. The peoples of Africa need the support of the international community, for the resources at their disposal are insufficient and have to be devoted to paying for both their external debt and development. Africa today spends four times as much on servicing its foreign debt than it does on education and health combined. A small increase in the official development assistance that has been provided to Africa this year with many conditions; debt relief or cancellation initiatives; promises to promote foreign investment and pronouncements regarding reducing agricultural subsidies, which boost agricultural production and exports, continue to be insufficient measures amounting to ridiculous sums when compared to the continent's needs.

African countries urgently require — without interference and conditions — special and differential treatment, access to markets, stability in commodity prices, foreign debt cancellation, access to technology, a substantive increase in official development assistance and the necessary financial resources.

Cuba is a country with limited resources that has been subjected to a fierce economic, commercial and financial blockade for over four decades. That blockade has been strengthened during the last year, and its extraterritorial implementation has been expanded. In the spirit of solidarity, Cuba continues to extend its altruistic and disinterested cooperation to African countries. As an illustration of what can be

accomplished with political will and cooperation that is both disinterested and based on solidarity, I would like to refer to the fact that, between 1963 and 2002, over 83,000 Cubans provided technical assistance in Africa in the areas of health, agriculture, education and sports, among others. By the end of 2002, 2,340 Cuban collaborators were providing technical assistance in 27 African countries. During the same period, over 5,000 of our African brothers and sisters received technical training in various technical fields in our country.

A comprehensive health programme that has been developed since 1998 is the most current example of Cuban cooperation with Africa. Through that programme, Cuban health care professionals and technicians working exclusively in the area of primary care are providing their services free of charge to people living in rural areas. That programme also contributes to training the human resources of receiving countries, to developing HIV/AIDS prevention programmes and to offering technical advice. By the beginning of 2003, 1,148 Cubans were working in the programme in 13 African countries.

I would like once again to reiterate my country's offer to help the brotherly peoples of Africa in the struggle against the AIDS pandemic by sending an additional 4,000 doctors and health professional to create, free of charge, the infrastructure required to provide the population with the essential medicines, diagnoses, medical advice and follow-up. That personnel would also assist in training human resources. Cuba is also offering professors to establish medical school faculties and qualified staff to provide advice and to work in campaigns aimed at preventing AIDS and other diseases. I also wish to reiterate our willingness to donate antiretroviral therapy for 30,000 patients per year.

We should take action on an urgent basis, or the modest Development Goals outlined by the Millennium Declaration will be but an illusion for the peoples of Africa.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.